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Jerusalem Post sidebar with various advertisements including 'Winning cards', 'Skin disease outbreak', and 'Travel Experts'.



A firebombed IDF bus lies on its side near Ramallah yesterday, after rescue workers finished evacuating the 11 soldiers and the driver who were injured.

US denies PM-Arafat summit talk

By MICHAL YUDELMAN and HILLEL KUTTLER

As the US and Israel prepared for Monday's meeting in Washington between President Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, officials in both countries yesterday denied rumors that Clinton is trying to arrange a summit between Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Asked about Netanyahu's proposal to move into final-status talks immediately, Burns said that "Obviously, it's up to the Palestinians to decide whether or not they want to accept or go along with those ideas."

"We don't operate in a climate of pressure," Netanyahu said, accusing the media of "always wanting there to be pressure on me, and then you come out disappointed, because we withstood the pressure, or there wasn't any."

11 soldiers hurt in bus firebombing near Ramallah

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN Eleven soldiers and their bus driver were injured yesterday after a firebomb shattered the vehicle's windshield and it ran off the road and overturned near the West Bank refugee camp of Jelzoon.

officer sitting in front tried to steady the bus, but it zigzagged off the road, overturning as it slid some 15 meters down an embankment.

"As far as we're concerned, this is a very grave incident," said regional commander Lt.-Col. Shlomo at the scene.

University Hospital in Jerusalem's Ein Kerem section. Three suffered broken bones; two are still hospitalized.

Hammer appoints panel to probe school violence

By ARIEH DEAN COHEN A 17-year-old pupil was stabbed and seriously hurt by a classmate during a fight in a Jerusalem school yesterday.

"A school must be a safe, comfortable place to come to, and we must make every effort to ensure that this is the case, and prevent a situation in which pupils or teachers are, heaven forbid, afraid to come to school," Hammer said.

The Education Ministry spokesman said Hammer's decision came after increasing media reports of school violence.



Wounded baby released Dr. Michael Winter takes his seven-month-old daughter, Shani, home from Ichilov Hospital yesterday, 12 days after she was wounded in the suicide bomb attack at Tel Aviv's Apropro cafe.

Majority supports Palestinian state, fears war - poll

By Jerusalem Post Staff A majority of Jewish Israelis support the establishment of a Palestinian state, a Tel Aviv University survey found.

that the peace process will bear fruit, and a 6% decrease in those who support the Oslo process (from 54.1% to 48.0%).

Protest halts Rabin conspiracy talk

By ELLI WONGELERNTER A violent demonstration at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem last night by student supporters of Meretz and Labor forced the postponement of a controversial lecture on a "conspiracy" behind the assassination of former prime minister Yitzhak Rabin.

a half hour before the lecture was to be given by journalist Barry Chamish. Security officials, fearing that going ahead with the speech might lead to more violence, called it off while a couple of hundred students continued chanting slogans and pushing security guards outside.

divide segments of Israeli society. MK Ra'anan Cohen had sent a letter to the university demanding the cancellation of the talk, but the school responded that while it had "reservations on the contents of the lecture," it could not, on legal advice, ban it.

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NEWS

in brief

Mordechai seeking more Arrow funding

Israel is expected to ask the US today for funds to support the Arrow anti-missile program, Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai said yesterday in New York. The request will come in Mordechai's meetings with Defense Secretary William Cohen and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

Sunday deadline for decision on Abu Marzook

Israel has until Sunday to decide whether it wants to extradite Mousa Abu Marzook, the political leader of Hamas, who has been detained in a federal jail in New York for almost 20 months, according to a US federal prosecutor, Baruch Weiss. In January, Abu Marzook, 46, dropped his fight against extradition and said he wanted to go to Israel to face charges of conspiracy to commit murder.

That announcement set in motion a 60-day clock for extradition. Abu Marzook's lawyer, Michael Kennedy, demanded this week that his client be released because 60 days had passed. Weiss argued that the 60-day mark is Sunday. He also said that the US could continue to hold Abu Marzook because there is a separate immigration case pending against him.

Police detain settlers for beating Palestinian

Police detained two residents of Itamar near Nablus yesterday for allegedly beating a disabled Palestinian youth whom they said was throwing stones at them. The Palestinian arrived at an IDF base yesterday afternoon, saying the settlers caught him while chasing a group of stone-throwing youths, then beat him and dropped him off. The police said they detained then released the two settlers, and have not yet decided whether to press charges against them.

Arafat says Pakistan thwarted assassination

Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat has disclosed that Pakistani authorities detained suspects who were plotting to kill him during a visit to Islamabad last month, the Palestinian News Agency Wafa said yesterday.

ADL: US Jewish groups should stop meeting Arafat

The Anti-Defamation League yesterday called on US Jewish groups not to meet with Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat until he resumes cooperation with Israel on security matters.

ADL national director Abraham H. Foxman, currently in Israel, said that "the PA has terminated the crucial cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian security forces. Palestinian terrorists are once again targeting Israelis."

Three killed in head-on Negev crash

Two women passengers in one car and the driver of a second car were killed about 2 a.m. yesterday, when the second car swerved suddenly into the path of the first and they collided head-on near Moshav Nevatim in the northern Negev. The husband of one of the women was seriously injured and was taken to Soroka Hospital in Beersheba.

Egypt produces its first drone

Egypt has built its first military reconnaissance drone, the Al-Ahram daily reported yesterday. The Saham-1, or Arrow, will be used by Egypt's armed forces for aerial photography.

Smelly milk bags recalled

Tnuva recalled an undisclosed number of milk bags from Jerusalem stores yesterday, following complaints from consumers that they smelled heavily of acetone. Tnuva Jerusalem production manager Sbaul Reshef announced on Israel Radio that some milk bags distributed in the Jerusalem area had evidently absorbed paint odors during renovations at the Jerusalem dairy. He insisted the smells were external and that no foreign matter had penetrated the bags.

Bus passenger injured in stone-throwing

A passenger was lightly injured by glass shards, when a No. 45 Egged bus was stoned in Jerusalem yesterday evening. The bus's rear window was broken.

Settlers deny housing report

Council says Mordechai never approved thousands of units

By MARGOT DUDKEVITCH

The Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza dismissed a Channel 2 report last night that Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai had approved building plans for thousands of units in Judea and Samaria on the eve of his departure for Washington.

According to the head of the council's foreign desk, Yehiel Leiter, the report was an underhanded attempt to embarrass the government during Mordechai's visit in Washington and on the eve of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's trip there.

Asked for his response, Mordechai's media adviser Avi Benayahu said the minister approves plans according to the needs and nat-

ural development of the settlements, taking into account government decisions and only after all legal aspects had been thoroughly examined.

Leiter said there are now between 7,000 and 9,000 units throughout Judea and Samaria waiting for construction approval, many since 1993 and 1994.

"It's no secret that the previous government wouldn't have given initial approval," Leiter said.

Current building plans seeking final approval include projects for 19 units in Otniel, 200 in Kedumim, over 1,000 in Ma'aleh Adumim, 2,000 in Kiryat Sefer, a few hundred in Har Adar, 700-800 in Givat Ze'ev and scores of others scattered in different communities throughout Judea and Samaria, he said.

PA Police round up Jihad activists

By MARGOT DUDKEVITCH and agencies

Palestinian Police said yesterday they have arrested dozens of Islamic Jihad activists following the two failed suicide bomb attacks in the Gaza Strip on Tuesday.

"There are arrests to find out those who are conspiring against the Palestinian Authority," said Palestinian Attorney-General Khaled Kidra. Islamic Jihad sources said police detained about 30 of their activists during overnight raids. But Islamic Jihad disavowed the two bombings, charging instead that Israel staged them to divert attention from its settlement policy.

"The Islamic Jihad in Palestine declares from the Gaza Strip as it did abroad through its leader Dr Ramadan Shallah that it has nothing to do with the operations that occurred yesterday," Islamic Jihad spokesman, Sheikh Abdallah Shami, told a news conference in Gaza.

However, family members of the suicide bombers, Abdallah Madhoun, 19, and Anwar Shabrawi, 20, who were buried yesterday, admitted that the two were members of Islamic Jihad. Meanwhile, residents of the Netzarim settlement were astounded yesterday at the decision to keep the road running by their settlement open to all Palestinian traffic, less than 24 hours after the two bombers blew themselves up, narrowly missing a bus carrying the settlement's children to school.

"We are amazed that there has been no decision to close it, just as two years ago after a terrorist attack, the road was closed," said Netzarim spokesman Shlomo Kostiner last night. The residents are also demanding that the government carry out a promise made to them to build an overpass at the junction adjacent to their community. This, says Kostiner, is the only way to ensure their safety and prevent further attacks on vehicles and buses.



A Palestinian demonstrator in the Jabalya refugee camp in the Gaza Strip yesterday holds up a poster with a photograph of suicide bomber Abdallah Madhoun, who attended the local high school. The poster glorifies his action and promises to continue the jihad against Israel.

Netzarim residents discussed the problems regarding the road and the overpass with National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon, who paid them a solidarity visit there yesterday.

Israel to skip Chinese defense show

By STEVE RODAN

Israel has decided not to participate in a major Chinese defense exhibition in October because it falls on Yom Kippur.

The Defense Ministry released a statement yesterday that its Sibat export division will not organize an Israeli pavilion at the China Aviation Expo '97 in Beijing. Sibat organized a large Israeli pavilion at the previous Chinese expo in 1995. Defense officials said that during the exhibition, Israeli firms forged links with foreign companies that led to contracts.

The Defense Ministry statement stressed that Yom Kippur is the only reason for the Israeli cancellation.

In a rare acknowledgement of ties to Beijing, the Defense Ministry said: "Over the last two years, defense cooperation between the two countries has increased and there has been willingness to organize to repeat this participation in a similar forum."

The statement was released as Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai was about to begin his meetings with senior US officials, including Defense Secretary William Cohen. Over the last few weeks, US officials have quietly expressed renewed concern over Israel's defense relationship with China and said this would be a topic during Mordechai's visit to Washington.

One transaction that is expected to be raised is the \$250 million, Israeli-Russian deal to provide an early-warning aircraft to China. The deal was delayed because of Russian refusal to provide the Ilyushin-76 cargo plane but that hurdle appears to have been overcome after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's meeting with Russian President Boris Yeltsin last month.

Fast plane to China? Page 7

US A-G asked to probe Arafat's ties to World Trade Center blast

By HILLEL KUTTLER

WASHINGTON - Sen. Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania has asked Attorney-General Janet Reno to investigate whether Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat was involved in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing.

Specter said he was making the request in light of last week's Jerusalem Post report linking Arafat to meetings with Sudanese and Islamic terrorists prior to the bombing.

"I would very much appreciate it if you would con-

duct the appropriate investigation to determine what evidence exists, if any, of Arafat's complicity in this matter," Specter wrote to Reno. "It appears to me that, if true, Arafat would be prosecutable under US criminal laws. I would appreciate your advice as to what indictments could be brought."

In an interview with The Jerusalem Post last week, Specter had said he did not know "any of the facts one way or the other" and would reserve judgment.

Specter's office did not say yesterday what information he has received since then that led to his asking for the investigation.

Leah Rabin: JFK Jr. crossed red line

WASHINGTON (AP) - Leah Rabin charged yesterday that John F. Kennedy's Jr.'s magazine crossed the "red line" by publishing an article by Geula Amir, the mother of her husband's assassin.

"How, of all people, could he do such a thing?" Rabin asked of the son of president John Kennedy, who was assassinated in 1963. "Perhaps he needed a sensational piece to sell his paper."

In the March issue of George, Kennedy said he believes the article was offered to his political magazine in hopes that "my family history would bring added attention to their story."

But he also described the piece as "clearly the view of an anguished mother and a staunch right-winger," and not "an objective examination of the events surrounding the assassination."

Asked yesterday about Rabin's criticism, a spokeswoman for the magazine said Kennedy's editorial statement speaks for itself.

Geula Amir wrote that her son Yigal was goaded to shoot Rabin by Avishai Raviv, who actually was an undercover agent for the General Security Service.

Rabin, who was in Washington to promote her new book, Our Life, His Legacy, about herself, her husband, and Israel, said she normally doesn't talk about the killer, but made an exception to denounce the article.

Northern border residents protest budget cuts

By DAVID RUDGE

Heads of northern border communities yesterday pitched a tent to protest government plans to cut their budgets.

They charged that the government had reneged on previous commitments to give additional assistance to border area residents.

They also rejected allegations that the protest campaign was politically motivated, noting that those taking part in the demonstration included council heads from the Likud, National Religious Party, Labor, and independents.

The demonstrators, who set up their tent at Biranit, and took turns in blocking the road from Rosh Hanikra to Kiryat Shmona. There were no major disruptions, and police did not intervene.

The council heads also shut down municipal services.

"The aim is to remind the gov-

ernment of the decision of the previous administration, which was endorsed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the present government, to give residents of the North special assistance," said Shlomo Buhbut, chairman of the forum of heads of confrontation line settlements.

"The government in 1996 fulfilled all its promises, what concerns us is that this year we are already receiving announcements of significant cutbacks. That's the reason we have pitched this tent as a symbol."

Buhbut, who is also mayor of Ma'lot, said that Netanyahu had not responded to their calls for a meeting and no ministers had been in touch with them.

"This is only the start of our campaign and we won't cease until the government announces categorically that there won't be any budget cuts," he added.

PROTEST

Continued from Page 1

"We will never forget Who was killed/who did the killing."

"Freedom of speech is fine, but this is our freedom of speech as well," said Gabrielle Garay, a student from Belgium, "and we refuse to let this man speak on our campus. If this was organized by the regular university, hell would be raised, complete hell. They could only get away with it because it's the one-year program, people who are here for a year who have different ideas of what's going on from Israelis."

Inside the lecture hall, Chamish was presenting his assassination conspiracy theory to a crowd of journalists, the only people who were allowed inside the building. The demonstration taking place outside, he said, was also a conspiracy.

"This wasn't spontaneous, this was organized down to the sweaters," he said, referring to the Meretz sweatshirts many of the protesters wore.

"Somebody wants this stopped, and the only reason somebody is so passionate to have this stopped is clearly because they don't want this to be known."

US

Continued from Page 1

Levy conceded the PA is doing more against terrorism than before, but added: "As long as things happen out there, I cannot say it's doing everything it can. I know the US has made it clear to Arafat that fighting terrorism is a his basic obligation, as well as being a definite American interest. A political process cannot go together with terrorism."

Marilyn Henry adds from New York:

Another touch of the '60s was Chamish's argument: As in the case of president John Kennedy, a political leader had been assassinated, and there had been a massive coverup.

"The difference is that the conspiracy to kill Rabin was very sloppy; the conspiracy to kill Kennedy was pretty good," said Chamish. "The Rabin conspiracy has so many loose ends - and they're undeniable."

For organizer Bunn, who said the event was postponed, not canceled, the issue was freedom of speech. "The guy may or may not be right," said the 22-year-old from Indianapolis. "That's why we brought him to an academic institution, where there can be professors, students, Israelis and students from abroad, who can come and challenge his facts, his proofs, his theories, etc."

"This is not at all what I expected - I expected people to come and protest what he said. Never in my wildest dreams did I expect such violent protests from students."

Chamish, meanwhile, said he felt like Mark Lane, the first person who challenged the findings of the Warren Commission report saying there was a lone Kennedy assassin. "He was right in the end, and I'm going to be right in the end too," Chamish said.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, visiting the US, plans to tell American officials that Israel wants the peace process to move ahead. But, he said repeatedly, "We have to be sure the Palestinians are fighting terror."

In turn, he said, Israel has to do more to improve the lives of Palestinians in Jerusalem. "It is necessary to build for them. It is necessary to give them better education, and especially to show them that there will be changes in east Jerusalem in a very short time," Mordechai said.

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Mourning by her son,
Abraham Gubbay, and Family, London.

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mourn the death of
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a lifelong friend and generous supporter of education
and offer deepest sympathy to the family.

הקדמת הכתוב

First two Be admitted to

Russia, Belarus sign union treaty

By PHILIPPA FLETCHER

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia and Belarus signed an outline Union Treaty yesterday but agreed to rework the details after 11th-hour intervention by liberals in Moscow wary of further integration with Russia's controversial neighbor.

President Boris Yeltsin signed the treaty with Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko.

"The union does not create a single state. Each side maintains its sovereignty. At the same time it takes our integration onto a qualitatively new phase," Yeltsin said after the signing.

The accord was designed to build on a "community treaty" signed exactly a year ago when Yeltsin, then running for re-election, sought to appeal to nostalgia among Russian voters for the Soviet Union which collapsed in 1991.

But it was a far cry from the document backed by

Lukashenko, who wants eventually to unite his struggling 10-million-strong republic with the vast Russian Federation.

Few people in either country oppose integration, but there is fierce debate in Russia about the wisdom of rushing into a partnership with a country whose poor human rights record and slow reforms have put it on a collision course with the West.

The original 17-page draft was reduced to a three-page statement in furious last-minute bargaining sparked by reformists appointed last month to Russia's cabinet.

"Preparations for the document unfortunately did not take place without bitter opposition," said a grim-faced Lukashenko, barely hiding his disappointment at the signing ceremony.

But Yeltsin performed a difficult political balancing act, winning the approval of Russia's opposition communist leader Gennady Zyuganov.

An accompanying charter, containing the meat of the original

draft, was initiated by the presidents and sent for six weeks of reworking and public discussion.

Liberal critics feared the original draft could harm Russia's economy and make Lukashenko, who once professed respect for Adolf Hitler, a key player in Moscow politics.

Above all, liberals feared Lukashenko could win jurisdiction over decisions affecting Russia under a Supreme Council set to oversee the Russia-Belarus union under the draft.

The new document "is much more thought-out than before, thanks to intelligent people," Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Boris Nemtsov said.

Yeltsin said the treaty gave citizens of the two countries freedom of movement and rights of residency, property ownership and participation in local elections in both Belarus and Russia.

"It is entirely in line with those norms which have existed for a long time in the countries of the European Union," Yeltsin said.



Russian President Boris Yeltsin toasts his Belarusian counterpart Alexander Lukashenko in the Kremlin yesterday. (Reuters)

Wealthy town ignores suicides

RANCHO SANTA FE (AP) — The low-key burn of luxury life has returned to this community in southern California, a week after a million-dollar mansion was turned into a launching pad for a leap of faith in an alien spaceship ride.

Nothing remains to remind residents of last Wednesday, when 39 bodies were found in one of this exclusive suburban community's luxury homes.

The Spanish-style mansion where wide-eyed Heaven's Gate cult leader Marshall Applewhite and followers performed a tidy suicide ritual stood vacant yesterday.

A road crew worked on Colina Norte, the dead-end lane leading to the home, but otherwise everything was quiet in this community of rolling hills a few miles from the Pacific Ocean.

Even the discovery of handguns and rifles in storage bins rented by cult members did not appear to shake the certainty of sheriff's investigators that the cult planned nothing more than a suicide.

Lt. Jerry Lipscomb, the sheriff's

lead homicide detective, said there was no evidence the cult used weapons "either for hunting or criminal activity." Some cars on the main road slowed as they passed the blocked cul-de-sac, but there was nothing to be seen and they moved on through the citrus orchards, and eucalyptus and pepper trees.

"I think time will gradually normalize things," said Philip Keep, a 23-year resident. "I think people recognize that this was an unfortunate thing that could happen anywhere." The cult had lived there since October, making little contact with neighbors. Rancho Hand Car Wash, however, was one place where they left a void.

Cult members would bring cars in just about every other day. Their vehicles were always very clean and usually needed only minor touch-ups. If not the best-paying customers, the members of Heaven's Gate were the friendliest, said Jim Sarenna, an employee.

"It was kind of a social event for them. They'd come down and talk," he said.

Lebanese, 135, may be world's oldest man

QINEH, Lebanon (Reuters) — Jeanne Calment, move aside.

According to official Lebanese records the oldest person in the world lives in Lebanon, not France, and he is a man, not a woman.

Former charcoal burner Ali Mohammed Hussein can hardly hear or see and his speech is unintelligible, but he still walks shakily around the remote, impoverished village of Qineh in northeastern Lebanon with the help of a walking stick.

The records say he is 135 years old.

His blue eyes are rheumy, his face is covered with a rough, white beard and his hands tremble as he sits hunched in a blanket on an old mattress in his one-room stone hovel.

Hussein's oldest surviving son Hammoudi, 62, shows his father's identity document. Issued in 1996, it says he was born in 1862 at Qineh, a village of flat-roofed stone cottages in the rocky uplands of Akkar, Lebanon's northernmost province.

The date on the card would make Hussein 13 years older than Calment, officially the oldest person in the world at 122, and 21 years older than Christian Mortensen of Denmark, who at 114 is believed to be the world's oldest man.

Hussein's age is also registered in Interior Ministry records at the nearby town of Konbayat.

Like all official records in Lebanon, his birth date is based on the country's only complete census, taken in 1952 under French rule.

Birth and death records were not kept systematically in Lebanon before 1932 and Hussein's remote northern village did not even appear in a partial census taken in 1921.

But a government official said he believed Hussein's 1862 birth date was correct.

UN repatriates Zaire refugees

GOMA (Reuters) — The UN refugee agency started repatriating 3,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees from Zaire yesterday and a UN investigator accused rebels of massacring the Hutus late last year.

The rebels meanwhile dismissed the nomination of Etienne Tshisekedi by the opposition in Kinshasa as Zaire's new prime minister as making no difference to their goal.

Peter Kessler, a spokesman for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Goma city, said the agency expected to have repatriated 3,000 Hutu refugees by truck to Rwanda from Karuba by the end of yesterday.

Aid officials said 20,000 refugees remained at Karuba west of Goma and they expected sites at Tingi Tingi and Amisi were emptied of refugees by two flights yesterday to Goma for repatriation.

Kessler said the highest death rate appeared to

be at km 80 south of the rebel-held northeastern capital of Kisangani where about half the 800 refugees there in mid-March had died of malnutrition, malaria, sickness and their wounds.

He said aid agency staff clearing shelters at Lulu, seven km south of Kisangani, found 50 bodies on Monday of refugees who had died from exhaustion, sickness or malnutrition.

The rebels ordered 20,000 refugees to leave Lulu on Monday and join another 60,000 farther south of Kisangani for security reasons. The rebels fear they include former Rwandan Hutu troops and militiamen who fought alongside Zairean government troops.

In Geneva, a UN human rights investigator accused the rebels of massacring Rwandan refugees during their push across the region late last year and urged a speedy investigation.

Roberto Garreton said upon his return from a three-day visit to Goma that the rebels had failed

to come up with satisfactory answers to allegations of killings, torture and disappearances.

At a news conference, Garreton said eyewitness accounts of the number of people killed by the rebels ranged from hundreds to 50,000 and demanded a detailed probe by independent experts to be appointed by the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva.

"There were massacres by the rebels. That's for sure. There's an enormous list of allegations of massacres but it is impossible to give numbers," the Chilean investigator said.

Zaire accuses Rwanda's Tutsi-dominated army and Ugandan troops of supporting the rebels, but they deny these charges.

"I can't say that the Rwandan and Ugandan armies are there with their generals and colonels. But the local people view the rebel forces as an occupation army. It is clear that these rebels are not Zaireans," Garreton said.

Death penalty hangs over McVeigh

DENVER (AP) — Tintony McVeigh, wearing a buzz haircut and blue oxford shirt, leaned forward in his chair and watched as several men and women were asked if they could order his execution.

"The person that committed this crime should get the death penalty," a man who works in a paint warehouse wrote in his questionnaire about the Oklahoma City bombing.

The married father of a 15-month-old son was also asked if he could base his decision on the evidence alone.

"You won't make a decision until the fat lady sings?" US Attorney Patrick Ryan asked. "Right," he responded.

By the close of the second day of jury selection, 12 people had been questioned by lawyers and the judge on matters like the death penalty and pretrial publicity.

Mostly reporters filled the courtroom. Fewer than a dozen bombing survivors and their relatives were present.

Openness to the death penalty is

a requirement for jurors.

Only one person was dismissed, a woman who broke into tears during questioning. Most said they would be able to recommend death if circumstances warrant the penalty.

McVeigh faces federal murder, conspiracy and weapons-related charges in the April 1995 federal building bombing that killed 168 people and injured more than 500. Nineteen children were among the victims.

The other suspect, 42-year-old Terry Nichols, will be tried separately.

McVeigh, 28, looked directly at the men and women as they were questioned. His father, William McVeigh, sat in the front row, telling a reporter he had not seen his son for almost two years until the eve of the trial.

"He was happy; he was smiling. It was Timmy," Bill McVeigh said in yesterday's edition of the Rocky Mountain News.

He and his former wife, Mildred Frazer, have sat in the front row of the public seats during the jury selection.

One man said that as a Catholic philosophy professor he was generally against the death penalty, but "I could consider death."

No foreigners please, we're British

LONDON (Reuters) — Britain lived up to its "little Englander" reputation yesterday when the ruling Conservatives banned Europeans from the launch of their election manifesto.

The French fumed. The Dutch opted to grieve and bear it while weary German journalists blamed age-old British xenophobia.

"This reinforces all the prejudices about Britain's isolationism. Obviously the Conservatives' defense against the rest of Europe starts here and now at Conservative Central Office," said Tina van Hout, a Dutch journalist.

The fracas began when the Conservative Party summoned journalists to the unveiling of its party manifesto, not least on its plans for European economic integration and NATO enlargement.

Prime Minister John Major spoke of "a confident, united and sovereign nation" and of a Britain that was "the best place in the world to live." Others begged to differ.

Indeed, no sooner had the doors closed behind him, than a furious foreign press corps questioned Major's pledge to stay at the heart of Europe.

"For us on the continent, this is the most important European elec-

tion this year and we should have been allowed access," said Theo Zoll, bureau chief of German television ZDF.

The angry outcasts lodged a formal complaint with Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind, saying such shenanigans never happen back home.

"We have no prejudices like the stereotypes say," said Reinhard Haecker of Germany's *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*. "It never happens in our country that a British person is excluded and we expect to be handled the same way in this country, especially after Mr Major told us he will be at the heart of Europe."

"I'm disgusted but not surprised," said Etienne Duval, who works for French, German, Belgian and Swiss television.

"They say there are no votes in France and when MPs talk to us, they more often than not ask for 50 pounds (\$82) or more. It's only money that gets most of them to talk to us in Europe." The Conservatives, already caught up in cash-for-questions scandals on a much grander scale, said the dispute was over space and nothing seamier.

"This room only seats 300," said one top aide to Major.

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הכרזת הקבלה

CAVEAT EMPTOR!

Get-rich-quick money no longer tainted

By HAYIM BLUM

"Please, God!" beseeched the old man of Jewish-Joke fame. "Would it have killed you to let the win the lottery once in my poor miserable life? I'm just as good a person as anyone else..."

"I would have been happy to help you," God responded, "but you never bought a ticket!"

Encouraged by reader request - and a growing number of people who take this joke seriously - I devote this column to Israel's lottery.

Though the lottery was established here as early as 1957 (using the phrase which rhymes in Hebrew: "Pays in country, Pays in town - Pays turns the poor into rich" to encourage people to buy tickets), it was not a smashing success. This may have had something to do with the general socialist attitude - in those days, the only acceptable attitude - that money earned not by the sweat of one's brow was somehow tainted.

Though the lottery tried to impress on the public that the money was going towards "building" the country - not just into the pockets of a handful of winners, it still did not take off in a big way until the 1980s. This, too, may have had more to do with a change in public attitudes than with the bombastic marketing techniques.

In 1982, Mifal Hapayis began its subscriber program, an Israeli invention which began to catch on in lotteries around the world. This innovation was geared towards the couch potatoes among us, who'd like to have a chance at a lucky break, as long as we don't have to drag ourselves out to some concession stand once a week, or worry about whether we have a few shekels in our wallets with which to pay for a ticket.

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Today, 15 years after its conception, the number of subscribers is between 600,000 and 700,000.

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When filling out cards at lottery concession stands or shops, make sure that the number of your card matches the number printed out by the machine. According to one shopkeeper, when particles of dust or ink get on the cards, the machine occasionally "misreads" the magnetic lines at the bottom of the card.

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You are invited to offer personal stories about goods and services in this country. Write to: Ruthie Blum, POB 81, 91000 Jerusalem.

FLAIR

Oberson's best yet

By GREER FAY CASHMAN

For a while, it seemed as if the muse was giving Gideon Oberson a miss. Beset by financial woes, Israel's premier couture designer seemed to have put his creativity on hold while sorting out his money problems. But then swimwear company Kih Yoffi came to the rescue, buying out Oberson's own swimwear operation while retaining him as designer under his own brand name, and the muse came dancing back.

There was already a hint of this a few weeks ago when Oberson launched the fashion career of his daughter Karen. The two held a mini show around the family pool in Kfar Shmaryahu to let their clients know that a fresh breath of youth was breezing through the Oberson salon.

At a benefit show held last week, the consensus was that Gideon Oberson and Kareo Oberson a.k.a. GO and KO, make a very good team.

From the smiles, nods, bursts of applause and comments exchanged, it would be fair to say that fashion reporters were not alone in their opinion that this was Oberson's best collection in years.

Aside from the rich array of fabrics - filmy organzas, floating, gossamer-fine chiffos, glitter surfaces and intriguing stretch Lyera - the styling and the superb cuts were simply stunning.

Oberson has always been a master of shape, but this time he has absolutely outdone himself, and Karen is living proof of the apple not falling far from the tree.

Her white, trumpet-sleeved, loosely buttoned, cropped boxy jacket paired with loose-fitting tie-waisted black pants was a delightful synthesis of elegance and energy.

Equally exciting were her wrapped mid-calf skirts over slightly longer pants or straight skirts, and her button-through belted halterina dresses opening most of the way to reveal matching shorts.

Meanwhile father Gideon infused high drama with romance in filmy layered evening gowns. A brilliant turquoise offering had a shimmering water effect induced by horizontal pleats which moved like waves.

Olive green became anything but drab in an empire line ensemble which featured a



Oberson's spring/summer collection

sequined zigzag bodice topped by a square-shouldered, shawl-collared bolero.

Blues and greens in almost every hue figured prominently in Oberson's lavish output, ranging from the palest ice-and-water tones to deep shades of inky blue-black.

Some of the filmy gowns were almost a homage to the Mediterranean with washes of vivid blues and greens merging into each other.

Prints were largely confined to scattered, star-shaped flowers.

With few exceptions, necklines were low-cut and revealing, indicating that now is the time to slowly start developing a good suntan.

All in all there were few colors omitted from the Oberson palette, which means that for those who can afford him, there's no problem in finding a color that suits.

Oberson's prices start in excess of NIS 2,000, but his daughter's designs are to a more modest price range, beginning at NIS 650.

Blockbuster art show reveals malaise of 1930s

By MARILYN AUGUST

PARIS - Threatening Times is an apt title for France's latest blockbuster show of the art which emerged from the grim social and political climate of the 1930s.

With more than 500 paintings, sculpture, photographs, newsreel clips, posters, books and magazines, this mega display reads like so many visual warnings of the death and destruction that would follow Hitler's rise to power.

The show covers lots of ground - from cool abstractions by Piet Mondrian and sensual sculpture by Henry Moore to realistic renditions of the Aryan ideal muscled blond youth in Nazi brown shirts.

There's also plenty of social realism, with Henri Cartier-Bresson's black-and-white photos of striking French auto workers sleeping on the floor of a Renault factory.

German photographer August Sander captured his country's Jewish bourgeoisie with a series of haunting portraits. Unsmiling and dignified, each one is entitled Portrait of a Persecuted Jew.

Cadavers, invalids, death masks, mutilated torsos in military tents, pictures of the homeless, the unemployed and the persecuted. These works are compelling, but depressing too.

Whether abstract or figurative, the works paint a portrait of humanity adrift

and oppressed in a vain struggle for freedom.

The exhibit whose title comes from Rene Magritte's 1929 masterpiece, Le Temps Menacant, celebrates the 60th anniversary of the city's Museum of Modern Art, where it opened last month and runs through May 25.

The works are hung chronologically, beginning in 1929 with the Wall Street stock market crash and ending with Germany's invasion of Poland in 1939.

They are spread out over the museum's three floors and require comfortable shoes and stamina to be seen in their entirety.

For French art critic Yves Kobry, the

show underlined "a malaise in civilization." Malaise may be putting it mildly.

The 1930s were fraught with upheaval and tension as political leaders in Italy, France, Spain and Germany pounded home nationalistic messages laced with anti-Semitism and xenophobia.

The art world was in tumult too. Various "tendencies" coexisted and crashed into each other," Kobry wrote in the monthly *Beaux Arts Magazine* which devoted a special issue to the exhibition.

Among them: cubism, abstract expressionism, surrealism, Dadaism and post-Impressionism which flourished in the 1930s and then vanished.

Many of the works are cries of indigna-

tion, such as Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*, (1937) on loan from Madrid's Museo Nacional Centro de arte Reina Sofia. The work is widely regarded as one of the eloquent condemnations of the bombing of a small Spanish village during the Civil War.

Joan Miro's *Aidez l'Espagne* (Help Spain) is an outright plea to the outside world.

The only major artist to support General Francisco Franco's dictatorship was Salvador Dali, a diehard monarchist who, admittedly, was equally fascinated with Hitler.

One of the show's highlights is Dali's *The Enigma of William Tell*, a monumental, surrealist painting executed in 1934

which the artist's peers denigrated as a "counter-revolutionary" attempt to ridicule Lenin.

In the work, loaned by Stockholm's Moderna Museet, a half-naked Communist worker, wearing Lenin's trademark goatee and mustache, is on his knees. One elongated buttock resembling a giant, horizontal phallus is held up by a slingshot, while the visor of his cap is stretched in the other direction like a flapping tongue.

There are also a few surprises. Pierre Bonnard's peach-skinned nude soaking in the tub, with feather-light brushstroke and bold colors, strikes visitors as singularly out of step with the rest of the 1930s. (AP)

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The Belarus union farce

Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko once professed admiration for Adolf Hitler. Thankfully, he has shown no propensity for emulating him and seems content with being a grim-faced lower-echelon dictator; but he is still one of the more unsavory characters thrown up from the debris of the collapsed Communist empire. Given that survival is the religion of such power-hungry inadequates, it is hard to know what to make of Lukashenko's obsessive drive to reunite Belarus with Russia. Such men are not usually driven by a desire to put themselves out of a job — the inevitable result of such a union.

After much ballyhoo about the proposed signing of the outline Union Treaty between the Russian bear and the Belarussian ferret — and even considerable international attention — the actual exchange of signatures yesterday turned out to be somewhat farcical. The usual theme of such rare ceremonies (as when new states join the European Union) is of course to emphasize the seriousness and virtues of the new union. Yet President Boris Yeltsin's first words after the signing insisted that the treaty in no way creates a single state and that each side maintains absolute sovereignty. Its purpose, said Yeltsin, "is to take our integration onto a qualitatively new phase" — whatever that means. It seemed a thin reason for such a large political and media event.

Even more astonishing was the even grimmer-than-normal visage of Lukashenko at the ceremony and his sour comment that "preparations for the document unfortunately did not take place without bitter opposition." Both sides had assured their citizens that this treaty was a consummation devoutly to be wished — yet here was a signing ceremony with all the joy of a Third Reich annexing a Denmark.

There were several clues to the charade. It has been Lukashenko who has been pushing the proposed reintegration of Belarus into Russia — it is Russia that is wary of all the whys and wherefores of such a union. There are grave doubts in Moscow about the need to rush into a partnership with a new state whose poor human rights record, dictatorial tendencies, and scorn of reform have made it one of the West's least favorite regimes. However, before the last Russian election, it was exactly these attributes that made a Belarus union politically attractive in Moscow.

Hence, a year ago, when Yeltsin was running for reelection, a "community treaty" was signed between Belarus and Russia designed to tap into Soviet nostalgia and take the wind out of the sails of Russia's nationalists and pro-Soviet Communists. This led Lukashenko to believe his political savior was more ardent than Moscow was in reality. Hence, only hours before yesterday's signing, he found himself

like some abandoned bride faced with a fear of commitment from the other side. The treaty signed was a long way from the one Lukashenko wanted. After an 11th-hour intervention by liberals in Moscow, who were wary of further integration with this unsavory neighbor, the original 17-page draft treaty was slimmed to a three-page statement of intent. An accompanying charter, containing the substance gutted from the original draft treaty, was just initiated by the two leaders yesterday and sent for six weeks of "discussion and revision." No one is taking any bets on when it will next be heard of.

Significantly, the last-minute haggling was led by reformists appointed last month to Yeltsin's revisionist cabinet. Lukashenko still hasn't got the message — Moscow does as Moscow needs, not as Minsk demands. For Yeltsin, the political dividend is entirely kitchen-sink stuff — he actually managed to win some approval from his arch rival, communist leader Gennady Zyuganov. The reformist opponents simply do not want to soil their Russian hands by joining them with the likes of Lukashenko. Practically — and with reason — they also feared the original draft would harm Russia's economy if implemented. They see Lukashenko's motivation as dumping Belarus's economic woes — which he is unwilling and unable to confront — into Russia's lap, while using the union to carve out a playing role in high-power Russia politics rather than in the stagnant backwater of Minsk.

In fact, the treaty is a farce on many counts. As Russia's Democratic Union Party said, probably correctly, it is a vehicle for the proto-fascist Lukashenko to launch himself into Russian politics. Meanwhile, Zyuganov's gushing proclamation that "We again live in a union which stretches from Brest [on the Polish border] to Vladivostok" seemed farcically premature to say the least, especially as he added that Ukraine and Kazakhstan, Russia's most substantial neighbors, would soon join the federation as well.

Ironically if there is any fallout from the feeble Belarus union, it could point to disintegration rather than closer integration in the federation. A state like rebel Chechnya would be delighted to accept the measure of independence and autonomy codified for Belarus in the loose "union" treaty. This indicates what route Lukashenko should be taking. Instead of pursuing elusive personal ambitions for himself in Russia, he ought to abandon his grandiose and idiotic schemes, accept the independence of his people as a gift from the gods — and get on with reforms and democratic processes that would make their independence worthwhile and their lives worth living. He would be better off thinking not Soviet Union, but European Union.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AUSTRIAN JEWISH SURVIVORS OF THE HOLOCAUST

Sir, — I was born in Vienna in 1926 and spent my childhood there. My family and I were deported in September 1942 to Theresienstadt, and later Auschwitz, and I am the sole survivor. During all these years I have never received any substantial compensation from Austria and because I am an Austrian, Germany refused my claim for a pension for the loss of my family, my home, my education and my freedom. I became reconciled to the fact that Austria had abrogated its responsibility for the annihilation of everything and everybody dear to me.

When Austria finally agreed, 50 years too late, to make a one-time payment, I felt that at last an attempt was being made to redress the wrong, although the proposed amount was derisory. After filling in all the requisite forms and submitting them, I waited. When I inquired how long it would take, I was appalled to discover that payments were being made according to date of birth and at the present time, they had reached year 1922.

I was informed by the Organization for Austrians in Tel Aviv that the reason for the slow procedure was that it was being handled by volunteers.

After being silent for all these years, I suddenly feel an immense sense of outrage. I would like to sue Austria for compensation, for having left me bereft of family, everyone I ever loved, having destroyed my youth, poisoning even my childhood memories of my beloved Vienna and damaging my life forever.

I feel morally bound to expose the cynicism and lack of compassion of the Austrian government and its people and can only conclude that their intention is for the claimants to predecease the settlement.

LUCY MANDELSTAM
Hadera.

Hannah Lessing, Secretary General of the Austrian National Fund, replies:
The Nationalrat adopted in June 1995 the Federal Law on the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for the victims of National Socialism.

According to the Institute of the National Fund, the moral joint responsibility and the wrong inflicted on human beings by Nazism in Austria shall be recognized and special help be given to the victims, even though the sufferings can never be "repaired." The one-time payment as such can only be called a gesture.

The National Fund is headed by a full-time secretary general, six full-time employees, two half-time employees and nine work-study students (the average working time per day being 12 hours).

We are very sorry that Mrs. Mandelstam was therefore wrongly informed by the Organization of Austrians in Tel Aviv that the fund is only run by volunteers.

Since November 1995, more than 12,000 payments have been effected around the world. The payments are made according to age priority, due to the fact that the oldest applicants were born in 1891. In March 1997, we paid out to almost all applicants born till 1922. In case of grave illness, or social hardship, payment can be effected earlier. The committee of the National Fund also agreed to pay earlier all survivors of concentration camps, due to their enormous sufferings during the war. We are right now in the process of paying regularly the camp survivors and Mrs. Mandelstam's payment should be due within the next month.

NATIONAL UNITY

Sir, — The unity in Amotz Asa-El's fine article, "When unity works" (March 28) faces three problems.

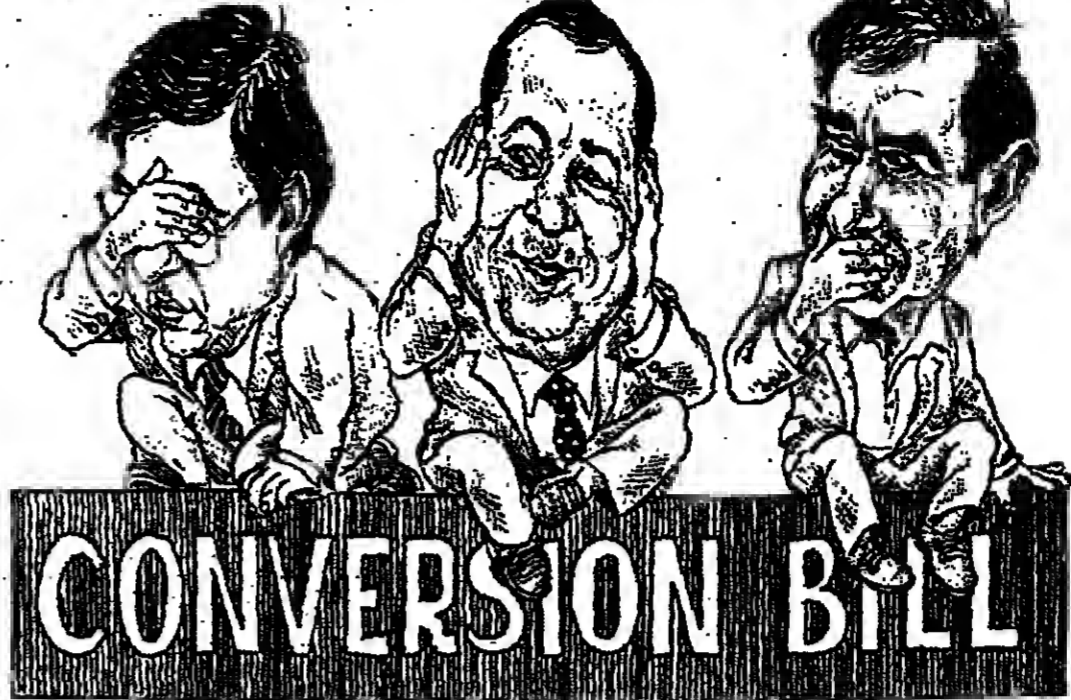
First, I cannot see how a government of national unity can exist when the arrogance of Labor does not permit it to accept that it was thrown out of office.

More critical, however, is Mr. Asa-El's assertion that "the question has been reduced to how to go about negotiating with the Palestinians" while retaining a maximum of national assets. The Labor government spent four years telling us that it had not given up any national assets. Mr. Peres told us that the Golan is Syrian territory. Yael Dayan tells us that East Jerusalem has nothing to do with Israel. Upon the signing of Oslo II, Binyamin Ben-Eliezer rejoiced openly at what he called "the end of Eretz Yisrael Hashlema." If the issue were negotiating to maximize our assets, Mr. Asa-El would be correct. But what 2,000 years of exile defined as assets are defined by Labor as liabilities that we should be happy to part with.

But perhaps the biggest block to national unity is the answer to the question, "what if it doesn't work?" I am very much in favor of national consensus and I firmly believe that most of the right would be willing to make surprisingly large concessions to achieve that aim. However, as long as Labor declines to address the possibility of continuing attack by the Arabs after a "final" settlement, much less address it in a way that the majority might accept — there isn't much point.

ISRAEL PICKHOLTZ
Elazar.

OLEF



Two Jewish mandarins

Shoul Eisenberg, that most discreet of multi-billionaires, took most of his many secrets to the grave. But not all of them.

One was the way he forged ties and trust between Israel and the most populous country on the globe — communist China. It was a remarkable achievement, for at the time Peking refused to recognize the Jewish state.

When, in the late '70s, Yasser Arafat asked Chinese leaders for aid against the Israelis, he was asked: "How many of them are there?" After being told: "Four million," they asked dismissively, "What hotel do they live in?"

All the greater the surprise when Eisenberg came to Menachem Begin some 20 years ago, and told him: "The Chinese are ready to make a \$10 billion deal with Jerusalem under which Israel's aircraft and defense industries would modernize the Chinese armed forces." Peking sought desperately to deter the might of a hostile Moscow.

With US approval, Begin gave Eisenberg the exclusive right to handle the deal. Hundreds of Israel's most skilled technicians, engineers and weapons experts flew quietly to China, carrying brand-new passports bearing the names of nearly every nation under the sun. They had been warned never to speak Hebrew in public. Soon they were busy upgrading China's Soviet-built tanks and outdated MiGs.

Very few people knew that Eisenberg was running a vast international business empire with an annual turnover of \$10b. And he made sure that foreign intelligence agencies, particularly the KGB, remained blissfully ignorant of the secret Israeli-Chinese partnership.

Until one day at a national military parade in Peking, Western military attaches noticed that the Chinese tanks were equipped with an Israeli-invented state-of-the-art attachment on the barrels of their guns, greatly enhancing their firepower. The cat was out of the bag.

Eisenberg, who came from a hassidic family in Munich before the war, had fled eastwards in the late 1930s and settled in Japan, marrying a local woman from a noble family. She converted to Judaism and the couple had six children. Eisenberg built a Japanese-style villa for them in Savoyon when he decided to come and live here.

Chinese leadership circles spoke respectfully of Eisenberg as the "Jewish mandarin." But he wasn't the first.

ANOTHER Jew, born in the East

URI DAN DENNIS EISENBERG

End of London, became a cult figure during the half-century he spent in China.

The mysterious, towering figure with a European air was invariably present when Chinese leaders posed in a group for the cameras.

You can see him in the photos of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen and Chiang Kai Shek. When the communists took over, he was there still, standing passive and unsmiling in a place of honor close to Mao Tse-Tung and Chou En-Lai.

Strangely enough, he never learned a word of Chinese.

When a writer of this column talked to Abraham Moshe Cohen in Manchester, England, at the house of his sister Rivka, "Two-Gun Cohen," as the skilled horseman and one-time pugilist was better known, explained how he communicated with the Chinese —

Shoul Eisenberg died a famous man. But who ever heard of 'Two-Gun' Cohen, who also won Chinese hearts?

"In English and Yiddish." "Yiddish?" "Yes," replied Cohen. Some of the Chinese leaders knew German, and were able — just — to grasp what the broad-shouldered Jew was saying.

"In 1932 I was hired as bodyguard to the Chinese revolutionary leader Dr. Sun Yat-Sen when he toured Canada. He invited me to do the same job in China, and a few months later I was in Shanghai.

"I was carrying a lot of weaponry with me — eight different kinds of guns — for I didn't know what to expect, not having been to China before. I was so top-heavy that when I stepped off the ship, I nearly fell over.

"I was at a meeting once," Cohen recalled, "when I realized that Dr. Sun was about to be betrayed by a conspirator. I warned a German-speaking Chinese general, in Yiddish (as usual). Later, Sun thanked me for saving his life.

"It's part of the job," I said. "You can always trust my Jewish head. It was then that I was made an 'honorary general.'"

On display were dozens of photographs of Cohen standing poker-faced in a group of grim-looking

Chinese leaders. And occupying pride of place on a small table were a series of postcards, each addressed to Cohen personally, and signed, simply, "Madame Sun."

"Why did she write personally to Cohen?" "We were close friends," he answered, and would not discuss the topic any further.

The deep impression Cohen made on the upper echelons of both pre- and communist China may well have paved the way for Eisenberg to become a major business personality there. After all, the Chinese knew so very little about the strange people that lived "in a hotel" somewhere on the other side of the world.

Cohen said that he was forever exhorting the Chinese leadership to "get friendly with Israel. They are the smallest nation on earth," he told them. "You are the biggest. You make a wonderful match in character, intellect and powerful motivation."

The Mossad has traditionally made use of Jews all over the world to help it in its work. And why not — since the State of Israel gives Jews pride, protection, and a sense that they are playing a role in supporting a Jewish country?

During the 1960s, Cohen recalled, the Mossad asked him to "open up channels" to the Peking leadership. He also had a good relationship with British intelligence.

"I had become a businessman when Rolls Royce appointed me their agent in China. Who else was on first-name terms with the top leadership in China?"

When Chiang Kai Shek was driven out by the communists and fled to Formosa, Cohen was asked: "How come you escaped disgrace? How did you manage to keep your 'honorary general' rank, and stand alongside the new leadership during those big parades?"

"I never interfered in internal Chinese politics," answered Cohen. Even the communists trusted me totally — and I was their sole expert on Western thinking."

Two non-Chinese mandarins, Shoul Eisenberg and Abraham Moshe Cohen, left an indelible mark on the country which could well dominate the world in the next century.

Both were Jews who held their heads high. Both were Zionists, the proud of their heritage. They deserve a salute from Jews everywhere.

The writers are authors of The Mossad: Secrets of the Israel Secret Service and other books on the Middle East.

PICTURE POSTSCRIPT



This street hawker has no trouble with shoppers squeezing the merchandise. He sells scorpions to Calcutta men seeking to upgrade their sex drive. The oil squeezed from a dead scorpion is used in India as an aphrodisiac. (Reuters)

POSTSCRIPT

A MAN who said he jokingly asked a bank teller for all her money was arraigned on a robbery charge.

Michael Johnson, a 33-year-old freshman at the University of Akron, Ohio, said the trouble began at the campus branch of the bank.

"When the teller asked if she could help me, I said, 'Yeah, give me all of your money,' and I laughed," he said.

"Then I handed her my card and said, 'I need to take \$10 out of my account.'

"I got my money. She gave me a receipt. And I went on my way."

But the police report says Johnson demanded all the teller's money in small bills before asking for his \$10.

"She told police she was sure it was a stickup," a policeman said. Johnson faces up to five years in jail and a \$10,000 fine if convicted.

Johnson's appearance might have something to do with his arrest, said his sister. "His right side is paralyzed. He walks with a limp and he carries his arm in front of him, upright and bent," she said. "He has a big shaggy beard and sometimes looks unkempt. I guess you could think he is a weirdo, if you don't know him."

Free at last

MIRIAM GLAZER

I can't imagine that millions of viewers across the globe understood host Billy Crystal's Oscar night joke about suddenly finding himself a Gentile; but having read the from page of the *Los Angeles Times* last week, I did.

The article told me that thanks to the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada, members of the Reform and Conservative movements, like me and Crystal, were now excommunicated. De-Jewed.

Bring on the pork sausages, Ma. We're free at last, free at last, thanks almighty New York Orthodox rabbis, we're free at last.

For starters, think of the culinary burden magically lifted from us. Pork sausages are only the beginning. Kosher, smasher, I can go out and get me one of those mouth-watering country — or city! — hams.

Garlic shrimp at my local Thai restaurant, any chicken but Empire's, swimming in wine cream sauce. Lord of lords, sin of sins — a once-in-a-lifetime Big Mac, and don't hold the cheese.

At last, some room on my library shelves. Out with *The Jewish Caravan*. *Eros and the Jews*. *Standing Again at Sinai*. *The Jewish Woman*. *Nice Jewish Girls*. *What is Jewish Literature?* Out with 15 shelves of Jewish religious and mystical texts. Holocaust novels, Hebrew poetry, Israeli politics, tomes like *The Jew's Body*, *Carnal Israel*, and *Antisemitism and the Jews*, novels written by women formerly known as Jews.

And I'll redecorate. Down with those artsy mezzotint on every doorstep of my condo; they're

Now I've been de-Jewed, I can really start living...

probably fraudulent, anyway, crafted by other former Jews. Down with paintings that evoke the Negev, or base their artwork on the Song of Songs.

I'll pack away even my mother's exquisite needlepoints. With their menoras, Lions of Judah, prayer motifs, they are, regrettably, just "too Jewish."

No more nervously scanning the paper for the latest anti-Israel outrage. No more anxiety about whether the Hubble telescope, genetic engineering, the Internet, Ben & Jerry's, or White House pajama parties are "good for the Jews."

No more giving to the New Israel Fund, the Jewish Federation, my synagogue building fund, Jewish Family Services/ orphanages in Israel, or even the Democratic Party.

In fact, now I can vote against "illegal aliens," against welfare, the minimum wage, taxing-and-spending, the tired, the poor, the tempest-tossed huddled masses yearning to breathe free.

THANK you, rabbis. No more shall I be hindered by the prophetic cry, "Justice, justice, thou shalt pursue." It was just so... Jewish. And all that conflict over teaching both Western and Jewish civilizations — why should I care, now? I can leave the task of educating young Jewish college students about their history and culture to those who carry the banner of true Judaism. What can they learn from an un-Jew like me?

How the Sunday Travel section has opened up! No more annual trekking to pricey Israel. Around the Days of Awe, I'll go mountain climbing, perhaps in Nepal; and Succot is a fine season for camping out.

I'll exchange my Purim costumes for trick-or-treating on Halloween, and instead of the painstaking house-cleaning, Seder-planning "drudgery" of Passover — well, don't we all love Paris in the spring?

I wonder what those delicately-wrought silver Shabbat candlesticks of mine would fetch at auction?

Admittedly, I'll miss them, along with the kiddish cups, *halla* cloth, and Sabbath dinners; my glorious brass Hanukkah menorah and holiday celebrations with family and friends; the skullcap my student crocheted for me, and the prayer shawl I borrowed from my daughter.

But I'm free at last — I won't need any of that old ritual paraphernalia. Sabbath mornings I'll hit the gym instead of the shul. Anyway, I hear the building fund board is converting it into a center for a new 12-step program for the thousands — millions? — of other kicking-the-habit former Reform and Conservative Jews.

(Los Angeles Times)

In these times you cannot afford to be without POST

Fast plane to China?

Has Israel's military relationship with China become a little too cozy? Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai may face some tough questions during his visit to the US, Steve Rodan reports

The visiting US official is led to the entrance of Israel Aircraft Industries where he faces a model of Israel's Lavi, the dream fighter-jet that never achieved production.

illegally transferring US technology to Beijing. What they say is that Israel is buying the US as well as itself by supplying advanced Western technology to an increasingly aggressive Asian power.

The US appears to be moving away from a focus on the Middle East and toward an examination of Russia and China. This includes the role of Israeli technology in the Chinese military.

the others? They're abroad, aren't they?" As the US official, who did not want to be identified, recalls it, the IAI representative "turned four different colors," and finally said that the US official had been reading foreign press reports.

At the Pentagon and CIA, the assessment is that China will be Washington's strategic headache during the next decade. This year, China will annex Hong Kong and incorporate this prosperous democratic island into totalitarian China.

But Avni Benayahu, the spokesman for Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai - who is presently on an official visit to the US - says that the accusation that some of Israel's four Lavi jets were sent to China is complete "rubbish."

Former CIA director James Woolsey, who was recently in Israel to attend a conference on terrorism, says any US campaign to prevent China from intimidating its neighbors must be accompanied by an effort to stop high-technology exports to Beijing. And that means Israeli exports. "Taiwan is a democracy and the US commitment to Taiwan is precisely because, like Israel, it is a democracy," Woolsey says.

But today, the US officials say, both President Bill Clinton's administration and Congress will ask Israel quietly but firmly to curb Israeli sales of military or dual-use technology to China. Many of the officials no longer accuse Israel of

rocket fell on a nearby town, killing many civilians. But the toughest questions for Mordechai might come from Congress. Many in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives and Senate are furious over the failure of the Clinton administration to punish China for what they say are Beijing's violations of US missile proliferation statutes.



Mordechai may have to explain Israel's military trade with China.

that after the collapse of the Soviet Union China has become the new obsession for some US defense strategists. "In search of a new enemy, American strategists have increasingly looked at China," Ruben, who worked for years as a researcher in Washington, says. "I don't think analysis is driving this. I think it's a search for an enemy. I just don't see any reason that China is going to become more aggressive. The far more important issue is proliferation. But how can they argue that this is so dangerous when they're trading with China?"

"For those in the Asia business, this is one of a small number of issues that they are focusing on," the pro-Israel lobbyist says. "If it becomes clear that the Israelis and Russians are selling an early-warning aircraft it would be an issue."

US officials say that Washington will ask Israel quietly but firmly to curb sales of military and dual-use technology to China.

Benayahu, Mordechai's spokesman, says the defense minister's goal is to "learn first-hand the new members of the administration, including the new heads of the Defense Department and CIA as well as the new secretary of state."

Despite the debate, nobody expects the US complaints to be a public issue during the Mordechai visit. Such a move, US defense aides say, would embarrass China as much as Israel and hurt Washington's hopes of obtaining some benefits from Beijing. Congressional sources say they don't want to issue an ultimatum to Israel. What they prefer is to engage Israel in a dialogue over the supply of Israeli equipment to China and what alternatives the US could offer to stop technology transfer to Beijing and yet maintain the profitability of Israel's defense industries.

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Musolino, the Zionist

In particular Great Britain and Ireland, must be saved from the threat of a revolution backed by the Russian empire and assisted by China. Palestine, at the meeting point of continents, was the ideal site from which to arrest disaster, but only if it were given to the Jews. Due to their suffering, the Jews deserved sympathy, he believed. They were clever, intelligent, industrious, alert and rich. Palestine had been promised to the Jews by God, and if they would be allowed to gather in Palestine, a great number of "marvelous people" who had proved their ability to survive under the most arduous conditions could form a base from which they would stimulate the expansion of civilization across the region. In particular, they would cover it with a network of railroads to facilitate communications. However, Musolino did not envisage an independent Jewish state. His advice was that the Jews in the Holy Land should form a sort of principality within the framework of the Ottoman Empire. The Jews would pay duty to the Sultan and enlist in his armies, in times of peace and war. All males aged between 18 and 50 would be in the reserves.

line and less pagan compared to others." Their qualities and their rectitude were "a credit to the human race." They were excellent fathers, husbands and sons. And they were charitable to other members of their community.

Though the head of the Jewish principality would constitutionally be the subject of the sultan, the administration of the principality would be entirely independent, Musolino advised. He envisaged a liberal regime, equality before the law, and everybody's right to work. Property was sacred, as was the freedom of speech and of the press. The "Mosaic-Talmudic" religion would be the established creed of the principality - Musolino was aware of Ashkenazi, Sephardi and Italian Jews. A rabbinical council would assume the decisive authority in religious affairs. However, people who did not follow the requirements of

the established religion should be free to behave according to their convictions. The chief rabbi would be paid by the sultan, otherwise the religious establishment would depend on the community. Land property, including public baths, churches, graveyards and museums, would remain the sultan's; he would have to be paid for

the right to use them. And if a transfer of population was ordered to make room for the Jews, those affected were to be paid double the worth of the property they relinquished. Obviously, observes Romano, in describing such a system of government, Musolino was thinking more of the Italian state of the future.

Well, he may have exaggerated about the Jews - but isn't it nice that he did it?

'Dear Ruthie' will appear on Sundays, starting April 6.

THIS WINTER - HEAD SOUTH!

Israel's Southern Landscapes

by Aviva Bar-Am & Yisrael Shalem

Your personal guide to Eilat and the Negev. Another outstanding guide by these two veteran travel writers. Aviva Bar-Am is well known to The Jerusalem Post readers from her lively family travel columns. Dozens of family hikes and easy nature trails; fascinating car trips throughout the Negev; sensational walks off the beaten track; visits to ancient Biblical, Nabatean and Roman cities; explore Bedouin culture and modern settlements. Includes a unique English-Hebrew dictionary of flora and fauna. Highly acclaimed book. Softcover, 318 pp., with full-color illustrations.

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BUSINESS

in brief

Return of hotel star-rating system delayed

Israel's hotels will remain without star ratings until at least the end of the year, the Knesset Economics Committee decided yesterday. If the star rating is re-introduced, it will in all probability be under a system managed by an existing company rather than the government.

Among the names suggested by Tourism Ministry representatives is the Michelin company. The ministry had requested the rating system remain out of use until April 1999, but committee chairman Elie Goldschmidt insisted the matter be re-examined at the start of next year.

David Harris

Committee to discuss rabbis' wedding pay

MK Ophir Pines (Labor) expressed disappointment during yesterday's sitting of the Knesset Finance Committee at Income Tax Commissioner Doron Levy's admission that he is unable to tackle the issue of rabbis who receive payment for conducting weddings. Pines wanted to discuss the matter in the tax sub-committee, which he chairs, but finance committee chairman Avraham Ravitz (United Torah Judaism) insisted the debate be held in the full committee.

In a written opinion, committee legal adviser Anna Schneider suggested that in most cases the acceptance of "gifts" for conducting weddings is probably illegal. Ravitz said that maybe the legal opinion had been written too hastily. Levy told the committee the legal tools available to him do not allow for full action in this and other related issues. Pines said he intends taking up the issue again, this time in his sub-committee.

David Harris

Singapore seeks phone-upgrade investors

Singapore is offering telecommunications companies 100 million Singapore dollars (\$70 million) in grants to install new technology and improve the country's phone system.

Communications Minister Mah Bow Tan said Tuesday the grants could cover up to half the cost of such things as high-speed Internet access, video links and multimedia transmission, newspapers reported. The announcement coincided with the launch Tuesday of the first cellular-phone company to compete with the state-owned Singapore Telecom, the first step toward opening Singapore's monopoly phone market.

AP

Government posts surprising budget surplus in March

First quarter domestic deficit at NIS 692m.; Meridor silent on extra cut

By DAVID HARRIS

The government recorded a surprising NIS 188 million budget surplus last month, excluding granted credit, according to initial Treasury estimates published yesterday.

Over the first quarter, however, the government domestic fiscal deficit totalled NIS 692m.

Senior Treasury sources are now beginning to suggest that as a result of the March surplus, an additional budget cut may not be needed.

Finance Minister Dan Meridor

said he would only make a decision on a further cut once he had seen the balance for the first three months and not on the basis of a single month.

The cut would be deemed necessary to remain within the government-set budget deficit of 2.8 percent of gross domestic product.

On the basis of the first quarter, the deficit will reach some 3.3% of GDP by the year's end, according to former Treasury director general David Brodet, who left the post on Monday.

He said any cut to be made now would be only several hundred

million shekels, rather than the NIS 2 billion that he and former budget director Ran Kroll spoke of just over a month ago.

The figures, from the accountant general's department, show a domestic budget surplus of NIS 203m. (excluding credit) in March, offset in part by a NIS 15m. foreign deficit.

Treasury spokesman Eli Yosef pointed out that the foreign element of the deficit will grow significantly until economic aid is received from the US toward the end of the year.

The estimates published yesterday

are likely to change considerably before the final tallies are reached, he added.

"As we promised, we will now sit down and in a short while decide if we need to cut and if so by how much," Meridor said. "The problem is not with the deficit, but the level of revenues. Furthermore, we need to look at the slowdown in the economy, growth targets, the significant increase in unemployment, inflation and the balance of payments."

"We need to find out what happened to expenditure and revenues

before deciding what to do," Accountant General Shai Talmon said.

Before leaving the Treasury for the last time, Brodet once again attacked Bank of Israel monetary policy, saying it is one of the main causes of the slowdown in the economy.

He also called on central bank governor Jacob Frenkel to reduce interest rates once, twice or three times in a month, before the Treasury considers implementing a budget cut. He described the March budgetary data as "very reasonable."



Shmuel Slavin takes over as Treasury director-general

Shmuel Slavin (right), who took charge Tuesday as Treasury director-general, was officially welcomed by Finance Minister Dan Meridor at the Treasury yesterday.

'96 farm output growth almost stagnant

By JENNIFER FRIEDLIN

Agricultural output was almost stagnant last year, totalling 1.2 percent in real terms, according to data released yesterday by the Central Bureau of Statistics.

Output increased 11.8 percent to NIS 11.83b. from NIS 10.58b. Inflation last year was 10.6%.

The industry growth figure is the result of a 4% quantitative increase in output and a 7.5% rise in prices.

The nominal rise in the industry's earnings was 3%. However, when adjusted for inflation, earnings fell 7.6%.

Input costs rose 16%, mostly as a result of the increase in the price of animal food. Agricultural exports increased 19%, totalling 22% of all agricultural output.

Cotton exports went up 25% and exports of vegetables, potatoes and watermelons grew 100%.

Citrus fruit exports remained steady, while international sales of other fruits rose 15%.

Exports of flowers and other plants jumped 22%. Exports of animals and animal products fell 6%.

The Treasury THE ACCOUNTANT GENERAL

Bids are invited for the supply of the following goods, required by various government agencies throughout Israel:

Tender 6/97 - Supply of PORTABLE COMPUTERS

Tender Participation Pre-conditions

Computers offered must be produced by a manufacturer who, at the end of March 1997, is classified in the first or second TIER level, in accordance with the Gartner group grading. This tender will be conducted, in compliance with the regulations pertinent to the protection of, and preference for goods made in Israel, and made in areas nominated for national preference, as required by the applicable laws and regulations.

A meeting for suppliers will be held on Tuesday, April 15, 1997, at 1:00 p.m., in No. 2 Meetings Hall, 3rd floor, Ministry of Finance, 1 Rehov Kaplan, Jerusalem.

Suppliers participating in the tender should bring all the tender forms to this meeting.

Participation in the meeting is obligatory. Please come on time. The period in which the goods are to be supplied and service provided will run from the date on which the name of the successful bidder is announced.

Last date for submitting bids: Tuesday, May 13, 1997, at 12 noon. Applications for the tender documents should be made by fax only, to 02-5317778, giving the following information:

Tender no. _____ Subject of Tender _____
Name of company bidding _____ Authorized Trader's no. _____
Company's address, with postal code no. _____
Fax no. _____ Tel. no. _____
Company's bank _____ Bank branch no. _____ Bank acc. no. _____
(at which company has its account)

The tender documents and technical specifications will be sent, after receipt of a fax, as aforesaid.

Our address: Tenders and Buying Dept., The Accountant General, Finance Ministry, 1 Kaplan, 7th Floor, Room 714 or 715, or P.O.B. 13195, Jerusalem 91 131.

Additional details from Tel. 02-5317428, 02-5317418. No undertaking is given to accept the lowest or any bid.

D-Pharm raises \$6m. in private placement

By JENNIFER FRIEDLIN

D-Pharm Ltd., a Rehovot-based biotechnology firm, completed a \$6 million private placement, the company announced yesterday.

The company said it plans to use the funding to accelerate the development of treatments for epilepsy, cardiac tissue anemia, brain stroke, cancer and viral diseases.

The investors include the Apex-Leumi Israel Growth Fund, an affiliate of the UK-based Apex Partners venture capital group; the Vertex Group, an affiliate of Singapore Technologies; and the US-based Medmax Ventures.

"We are pleased that some of the world's leading venture capital groups have decided to support our drug discovery program," Yaffa Beck, the company's chief operating officer, said in a statement.

One of D-Pharm's main projects involves the development of an epilepsy treatment. The company plans to complete preclinical development of a novel drug for the disease this year and to begin phase one and two clinical trials by mid-1998.

Epilepsy - a disease which disturbs the electrical rhythms of the central nervous system, causing convulsive attacks - affects four million people in the US alone, and about two percent of the population worldwide.

Founded in 1993, D-Pharm received its first round of venture capital financing in 1995 worth \$2m.

Yishai: Relax closure for veteran workers

By DAVID HARRIS

Palestinians who have held work permits over the last five years should be able to come to their jobs inside Israel, even with a closure in force, Labor and Social Affairs Minister Eli Yishai proposed yesterday.

"This step will make it easier for the government to speed up the removal of the foreign workforce, Yishai said. In the short run, it will also ease the re-imposition of the closure, following the terrorist attack in Tel Aviv last month.

In a letter to the prime minister, Yishai said

his staff is currently examining ways of offsetting the shortfall in the workforce caused by the closure.

Yishai said his proposal was reached after consultation with security experts, including Ya'acov Or, the coordinator of IDF activities in the territories.

Palestinian Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Nabil Sbaath has long maintained the closure does not contribute to security, arguing that none of the recent terrorist attacks were carried out by legal Palestinian workers.

By allowing more Palestinians into Israel,

argues Yishai, economic tension in the territories is somewhat reduced, leading to less security threats.

Under the Labor government, writes Yishai, the number of legal non-Palestinian foreign workers increased from 10,000 to 105,000.

Religious MKs have expressed concern that the large number of foreign workers, estimated to be at least 200,000 when those here illegally are taken into account, endanger the Jewish character of the state.

The Prime Minister's Office declined to comment on the proposal.

Saudi prince buys 5% of Apple Computer

By DIANA ABDALLAH

DUBAI (Reuters) - Saudi Arabia's billionaire Prince Waleed bin Talal said yesterday he now holds five percent of Apple Computer, the latest in a string of high-profile international acquisitions in the past month.

The prince said he bought the Apple shares on the open market over the last weeks for a total of \$115 million, a move similar to his purchase of about 5% of Trans World Airlines Inc., which he announced on March 19.

Exactly a week later, the billionaire nephew of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia announced he was buying a 5% stake in the Norwegian Cruise Lines for \$20m.

Also in March, he said he was building a \$500m. complex in his hometown Riyadh, to house a Four Seasons Hotel, dubbed the largest commercial building in the region.

"I have been following the technology industry closely for quite some time, and Apple in particular for a number of months," Bin Talal said in a statement yesterday. "I

Referring to reports that an investor group led by Oracle Corp. CEO Larry Ellison was interested in making a bid for a controlling interest in the struggling computer maker, the prince said he "will monitor events closely" to see what steps are taken by Ellison, Apple's management, or by others, to improve returns to Apple stockholders.

Though not huge compared to the prince's other holdings, the new investments are part of a new business trend of diversifying his investments away from real estate and entertainment, financial sources close to the prince said yesterday.

"He has been looking into these companies for some time now. He is also considering other similar international acquisitions," one said, but refused to elaborate.

The financial analysts said the new investments were part of the prince's policy of buying stakes in all companies and trying to put them back on their feet.

The trend might also include bankrupt Dutch planemaker Fokker, for which the prince has emerged as

People who know him say he started with a relatively small amount of money from his father and is now one of the wealthiest and most powerful business moguls in the kingdom.

Surrounded by a close circle of advisers, he controls a portfolio that includes a bank, an investment firm, a supermarket chain, a broadcasting operation, and huge property holdings, including the Fairmont and Four Seasons hotel chains.

He has shares in US banking

giant Citicorp, retailer Saks Fifth Avenue and the Plaza Hotel, the Euro Disney theme park near Paris and Canary Wharf in London's Docklands.

He also has stakes in former Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi's television and advertising business Mediaset.

Earlier this year he bought the luxury George V Hotel in Paris.

Last year he signed a deal with popstar Michael Jackson to cooperate on concerts, films, television, fun parks and hotels.

BEZEQ, The Israel Telecommunications Corp. Ltd.

Bids are invited for the following goods:

| Tender | Description | Option | Last Date for Submitting Bids | Cost of Documents | Tel. for Questions |
|-------------|---|--------|-------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 15/97/151/D | Multichannel optical video transmission equipment | 100% | 20.5.97 | NIS1000 | 02-5395616/429 |

The following general conditions apply:

- Pre-conditions:
 - Parties submitting bids must comply with all laws, including the requirement to keep account books, be an authorized trader, hold valid licenses to trade, and comply with all relevant standard specifications.
 - Willingness to provide a guarantee, as explained in the tender documents.
 - Compliance with the "minimum" conditions, given in the tender documents.
 - The right is reserved to conduct negotiations with some or all the bidders, regarding details in their bids.
- The tender documents can be obtained from the Tenders and Ordering Department of the Purchasing Division, 15 Rehov Hazvi, Jerusalem, between 9 a.m. and 12 noon, Sunday to Thursday. The tender documents will be provided, on submitting a receipt of payment for the above amount:
 - In Israel, payment should be made into Bezeq's Postal Bank account no. 5-311757.
 - Overseas suppliers should make payment into Bezeq's account no. 12-901-97633/64, at the Jerusalem main branch of Bank Leumi Leisrael. The fee for the tender documents is non-refundable.
 The receipt, with details of your company, and authorized trader's number may be faxed to 972-2-378113. Please phone afterwards (972-2-5395615,4), to obtain confirmation of receipt of the fax.
- Bids should be placed in the tenders box at 15 Rehov Hazvi, Jerusalem.
- No undertaking is given to accept the lowest or any bid, or to order the entire work from one source.
- Bids sent by fax or telegram will not be considered.

"A fax for you"
All you want to know about your accounts, on your fax, within 15 minutes.
15 minutes. And you're gone.
ISRAEL DISCOUNT BANK

PRIME פריים
Mutual Fund for Foreign Residents
Date: 1.4.97
Purchase Price: 113.18
Redemption Price: 112.54
למכירת פיא פריים

מטרה TARGET FUND
Mutual Fund for Foreign Residents
Date: 1.4.97
Purchase Price: 159.95
Redemption Price: 158.81
למכירת פיא מטרה

| ISRAEL MONEY MARKETS | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|-----------|--|
| Patah (foreign currency deposit rates) (11.9.97) | | | | |
| Currency (deposit for) | 3 MONTHS | 6 MONTHS | 12 MONTHS | |
| U.S. dollar (\$250,000) | 4.750 | 5.000 | 5.375 | |
| Pound sterling (£100,000) | 3.875 | 4.000 | 4.250 | |
| German mark (DM 200,000) | 1.825 | 1.825 | 2.125 | |
| Swiss franc (SF 200,000) | 0.625 | 0.750 | 1.000 | |
| Yen (10 million yen) | | | | |

(Rates vary higher or lower than indicated according to deposit)

| Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates* (2.4.97) | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|--------|-----------|------|------------|
| Currency basket | CHECKS AND TRANSFERS | | BANKNOTES | | Rep. Rates |
| | Buy | Sell | Buy | Sell | |
| U.S. dollar | 3.8258 | 3.8843 | 3.82 | 3.49 | 3.6925 |
| German mark | 3.2277 | 3.2768 | 3.26 | 3.05 | 3.5770 |
| Pound sterling | 5.4872 | 5.5554 | 5.45 | 5.05 | 2.0078 |
| French franc | 0.5801 | 0.5967 | 0.58 | 0.54 | 5.5152 |
| Japanese yen (100) | 2.7153 | 2.7583 | 2.68 | 2.61 | 0.9961 |
| Dutch guilder | 1.7888 | 1.7983 | 1.73 | 1.68 | 2.7425 |
| Swiss franc | 2.2989 | 2.3380 | 2.26 | 2.17 | 1.7845 |
| Swedish krona | 0.4380 | 0.4481 | 0.43 | 0.40 | 2.3221 |
| Norwegian krona | 0.4888 | 0.5078 | 0.48 | 0.46 | 0.4483 |
| Danish krona | 0.5229 | 0.5314 | 0.51 | 0.52 | 0.5037 |
| Finland mark | 0.8940 | 0.9078 | 0.88 | 0.84 | 0.8761 |
| Canadian dollar | 2.3945 | 2.4332 | 2.36 | 2.08 | 0.5275 |
| Australian dollar | 2.6197 | 2.6620 | 2.56 | 2.47 | 2.4182 |
| S. African rand | 0.7551 | 0.7673 | 0.75 | 0.70 | 2.6455 |
| Belgian franc (10) | 0.9882 | 0.9905 | 0.94 | 0.77 | 0.7615 |
| Austrian schilling (10) | 2.8305 | 2.8782 | 2.78 | 2.92 | 0.8738 |
| Italian lira (1000) | 1.9629 | 2.0284 | 1.92 | 1.84 | 2.8539 |
| Jordanian dinar | 4.8200 | 4.9400 | 4.82 | 4.08 | 2.0185 |
| Egyptian pound | 0.9500 | 1.0300 | 0.95 | 2.04 | 4.7887 |
| Irish punt | 3.8738 | 3.9381 | 3.87 | 3.03 | 0.9987 |
| Spanish peseta (100) | 5.2722 | 5.3573 | 5.18 | 5.44 | 3.9387 |
| | 2.3488 | 2.3667 | 2.30 | 2.42 | 5.3141 |

*These rates vary according to bank. **Bank of Israel.
SOURCE: BANK LEUMI

Danger!!
Slippery Roads!
DRIVERS BEWARE!
Slow down!
Keep your distance!
Avoid sudden braking!

White Sox beat Blue Jays 6-5



TUG OF WAR - George Teodotu of Cyprus (left) fights for the ball with Daniel Borimirov, Bulgaria's first goalscorer in last night's World Cup qualifier in Sofia. Bulgaria won 4-1. (Reuters)

Bulgaria crush Cyprus in World Cup qualifier

SOFIA (Reuters) - Striker Emil Kostadinov scored twice to help Bulgaria to a comfortable 4-1 win over Cyprus in their World Cup qualifier yesterday.

Kostadinov, scorer of the decisive goal against France which enabled Bulgaria to qualify for the 1994 World Cup finals, put his side in command with two goals before half time, delighting the 30,000 crowd who turned out despite the rain and cold.

Daniel Borimirov had earlier opened the scoring in the second minute, blasting the ball past helpless Cyprus goalkeeper Andreas Petrudes from eight meters.

Ioannis Okkas hit back for Cyprus in the 61st minute when he headed past Bulgarian goalkeeper Zdravko Zdravkov from close range.

Ivailo Yordanov reopened the three-goal lead in the 66th minute when he fired the ball home after a neat passing exchange with Kostadinov.

Yordanov almost scored again two minutes later when he lobbed the ball over the Cyprus goalkeeper. The ball hit the bar and bounced down but the referee ruled it had not crossed the goal line.

Bulgaria missed another chance to go even further ahead when Krasimir Balakov failed to convert a penalty after handball by Neophytos Larcou.

Bulgarian coach Hristo Bonev, who has a good knowledge of Cypriot soccer following his spell in charge of Apoc Nicosia, said he

had been afraid his team might drop their guard after being 3-0 ahead at halftime.

He said his aim was to win the remaining home games against Luxembourg, Israel and Russia.

"My task is now easier as there is a good climate in the team despite attempts at outside influence," Bonev said, apparently referring to a television interview with volatile striker Hristo Stoichkov on Tuesday.

Stoichkov vowed last year not to play for his home side until the chiefs of the Bulgarian Football Union resigned.

He told state television by telephone from Barcelona, where he plays, that he had decided to fly to Sofia for the match and called Bonev from Barcelona airport but Bonev hung up when he heard his voice.

Cyprus, who held Russia to a 1-1 draw on Saturday, had several good chances, especially in the first half, but were thwarted by Bulgarian goalkeeper Zdravko Zdravkov.

"We came to Sofia with a lot of problems. We played two qualifiers in five days. The field was very hard for us... We lost to a better team," coach Stavros Papadopoulos said.

The game was played in Spain because of the conflict in Albania.

Although Germany stay third in group nine behind new group leaders Ukraine and second-placed Portugal, they have played two matches fewer than Portugal and one fewer than Ukraine. Both have to visit Germany.

There was an upset in Bursa where Turkey beat the Netherlands 1-0 in a group seven qualifier, thanks to a 52nd minute goal from Hakan Sukur.

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In another match played earlier yesterday, Macedonia beat the Republic of Ireland 3-2 in a hard-fought match in Skopje to leapfrog the Irish and move into second place behind Romania in group eight.

TORONTO (AP) - Albert Belle doubled home the first run of the 1997 major league season and later launched a two-run homer Tuesday as the Chicago White Sox beat the Toronto Blue Jays 6-5.

Pinch-hitter Norberto Martin tied the score 5-5 in the ninth when he hit the first pitch thrown by Toronto closer Mike Timlin.

Ray Durham streaked home from first base on what should have been merely an infield hit in the 10th before a SkyDome crowd of 40,299, more than 10,000 short of a sellout.

Carlos Delgado and Alex Gonzalez homered for Toronto. Roberto Hernandez pitched the 10th for a save, preserving the win for Tony Castillo.

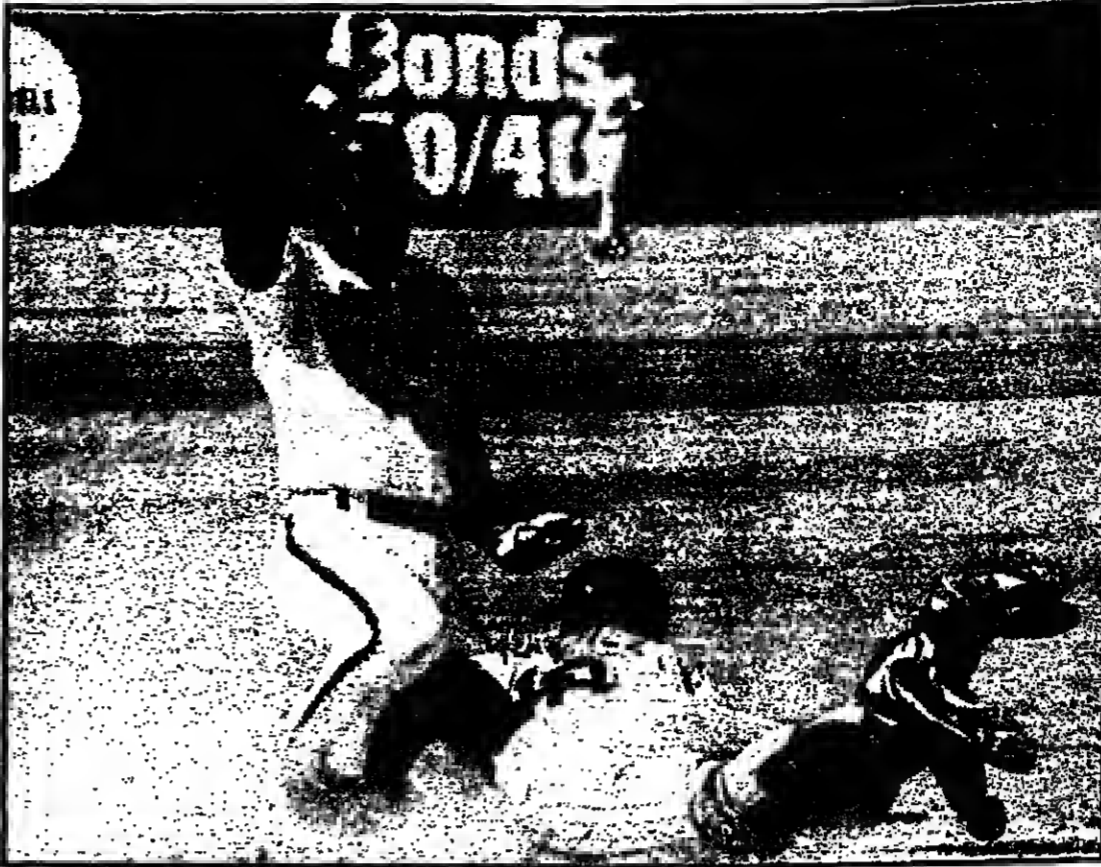
Rangers 6, Brewers 2 In Arlington, Texas, Lee Stevens hit a three-run homer, and Damoo Buford hit a two-run homer and an RBI double.

World Series Most Valuable Player John Wetteland, who saved all four Series wins for the Yankees, struggled through a 30-pitch ninth inning but got Dave Nilsson to pop up with the bases loaded.

Ken Hill, just 1-3 against Milwaukee last year, allowed both runs and six hits in eight innings, struck out seven and walked four. Loser Ben McDonald gave up six runs and seven hits in seven innings.

Mariners 4, Yankees 2 In Seattle, Ken Griffey Jr. homered in his first two at-bats, and Jeff Fassero pitched seven strong innings in his Seattle debut as the Mariners won for the 15th time in their last 17 home games against the Yankees.

Griffey, who hit a franchise-record 49 home runs last season despite missing 20 games because of a broken bone in his right hand, homered in the first and third innings off loser David Cone.



STORMING IN - Giants' shortstop Jose Vizcaino crosses the plate to put the first run of the season on the San Francisco scoreboard as Pittsburgh Pirates catcher Jason Kendall gets a facefull of dust. (Reuters)

Fassero allowed two runs and four hits in the first two innings before settling down to limit the Yankees to a single and a walk over the next five.

Norm Charlton gave up singles to Tino Martinez and Paul O'Neill in the ninth, then got Darryl Strawberry to ground into an game-ending double play inning for the save.

NATIONAL LEAGUE Reds 11, Rockies 4 In Cincinnati, Deion Sanders returned Major League Baseball with a big game and the Colorado Rockies fumbled around in the

field, helping the Cincinnati Reds pull away to an 11-4 victory Tuesday afternoon.

Sanders, who took last season off to become a two-way player with the Dallas Cowboys of the NFL, went 2-for-4 with an RBI, a pair of stolen bases and two runs scored to jump-start an offense that generated 15 hits.

Hal Morris had a pair of run-scoring singles and an RBI double, giving him a hit in each of his last 30 games. He ended last season by hitting safely in 29 games, but streaks don't carry over to a new season.

The Rockies, who were 28-53 away from Coors Field last season, rallied against winner John Smiley to tie it in the fourth. Vinny Castilla and Ellis Burks homered in the comeback.

Expos 2, Cardinals 1 In Montreal, pinch-hitter Sherman Obando drew a bases-loaded walk in the ninth inning, giving the Expos a 2-1 win over the St. Louis Cardinals.

The Expos opened the year against the National League's Central Division champions before 33,437 at Olympic Stadium, the fourth smallest

opening day crowd in 21 seasons at the ballpark.

Rondell White and Shane Andrews had two hits each for Montreal.

Willie McGee and Delino DeShields had two hits apiece for the Cardinals.

| American League East Division | | | | GB |
|-------------------------------|---|---|------|----|
| Team | W | L | Pct. | |
| Baltimore | 0 | 0 | .000 | - |
| Boston | 0 | 0 | .000 | - |
| Detroit | 0 | 1 | .000 | ½ |
| New York | 0 | 1 | .000 | ½ |
| Toronto | 0 | 1 | .000 | ½ |

| Central Division | | | | GB |
|------------------|---|---|-------|----|
| Team | W | L | Pct. | |
| Chicago | 1 | 0 | 1.000 | - |
| Minnesota | 1 | 0 | 1.000 | - |
| Cleveland | 0 | 0 | .000 | ½ |
| Kansas City | 0 | 0 | .000 | ½ |
| Milwaukee | 0 | 1 | .000 | 1 |

| West Division | | | | GB |
|---------------|---|---|-------|----|
| Team | W | L | Pct. | |
| Seattle | 1 | 0 | 1.000 | - |
| Texas | 1 | 0 | 1.000 | - |
| Anaheim | 0 | 0 | .000 | ½ |
| Oakland | 0 | 0 | .000 | ½ |

| National League East Division | | | | GB |
|-------------------------------|---|---|-------|----|
| Team | W | L | Pct. | |
| Florida | 1 | 0 | 1.000 | - |
| Montreal | 1 | 0 | 1.000 | - |
| Philadelphia | 1 | 0 | 1.000 | - |
| Atlanta | 0 | 1 | .000 | 1 |
| New York | 0 | 1 | .000 | 1 |

| Central Division | | | | GB |
|------------------|---|---|-------|----|
| Team | W | L | Pct. | |
| Cincinnati | 1 | 0 | 1.000 | - |
| Houston | 1 | 0 | 1.000 | - |
| Pittsburgh | 1 | 0 | 1.000 | - |
| Chicago | 0 | 1 | .000 | 1 |
| St. Louis | 0 | 1 | .000 | 1 |

| West Division | | | | GB |
|---------------|---|---|-------|----|
| Team | W | L | Pct. | |
| San Diego | 1 | 0 | 1.000 | - |
| Colorado | 0 | 1 | .000 | 1 |
| Los Angeles | 0 | 1 | .000 | 1 |
| San Francisco | 0 | 1 | .000 | 1 |

Tuesday's AL results: Chicago 6, Toronto 5 (10); Texas 6, Milwaukee 2; Kansas City at Baltimore ppd; Seattle 4, N.Y. 2; Minnesota 7, Detroit 5; only games scheduled.

Tuesday's NL results: Montreal 2, St. Louis 1; Cincinnati 11, Colorado 4; Florida 4, Chicago 2; Philadelphia 3, Los Angeles 0; Pittsburgh 5, San Francisco 2; San Diego 12, N.Y. 5; Houston 2, Atlanta 1.

Germany survive World Cup scare, but Dutch crash

LONDON (Reuters) - Substitute Ulf Kirsten scored a 20-minute second-half hat-trick as European champions Germany came back from a goal down to beat Albania 3-2 in a dramatic World Cup qualifying game last night.

Albania missed an early penalty and then went ahead from a second spot kick in the 61st minute through Bledar Kola.

Kirsten then scored in the 64th, 80th and 84th minutes before Kola scored another penalty in the last minute.

The game was played in Spain because of the conflict in Albania.

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SEATTLE (AP) - Nick Van Exel scored 30 points as the Los Angeles Lakers won their fourth straight and closed within a half-game of first place in the Pacific Division with a 99-97 victory over the Seattle SuperSonics on Tuesday night.

Van Exel's free throw with 3.1 seconds left gave the Lakers a 99-95 lead that clinched the victory.

Los Angeles swept the Sonics in Seattle and won the season series 3-1. The Lakers will have the tiebreaker advantage if the teams finish the regular season with the same record.

Van Exel made 10 of his career-high 28 shots and also had six assists, six rebounds and five steals. Eddie Jones added 20 and Jerome Kersey 14.

Bulls 111, Celtics 106 In Chicago, Michael Jordan broke out of a shooting slump with 21 points and Chicago won its 29th straight home game.

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Australia dampen Puskas' birthday party

BUDAPEST (Reuters) - Australia deflated the celebrations surrounding the 70th birthday of Ferenc Puskas when two goals in the last two minutes gave them a 3-1 win over Hungary in a friendly international yesterday.

The irony of Australia defeating Hungary in the week when the "Mighty Magyars" trounced 6-3 victory over England at Wembley in 1953 was back in the headlines, will not be lost on the soccer community.

The modern-day Hungary are a pale imitation of Puskas' great side of the 1950s and the old maestro was among the 18,000 crowd who watched in amazement as the team coached by Englishman Terry

Variables scored twice in the closing stages to win. Australia, on a tour of Europe as part of their warm-up for their World Cup qualifiers which start in June, took the lead in the sixth minute through Tony Vidmar who scored with a simple header.

The home side equalized through Laszlo Klausz who broke through the Australian defence in the 31st minute for a fine individual strike.

Second half pressure by Hungary failed to find a breakthrough and just as the match appeared to be ending in an honourable draw, goals in the 89th minute through Kevin Muscat and a second by Vidmar in the dying seconds gave Australia their victory.

England lock Martin Johnson, named as captain of the 35-man squad announced yesterday, is under no illusions about what lies ahead on a 13-match tour including three Tests and promised the

Springboks a red-blooded confrontation.

"The Tests and provincial games are going to be more physical than any of the Five Nations games," acknowledged Johnson, one of six Leicester players named by the Lions selectors.

"I'm sure teams out there will physically intimidate us in a fair way and we've got to be ready to stand up to them. I don't think it'll

be a dirty tour because international rugby has changed but it will be very physical."

The squad includes a number of players chosen for their physical assets, yet among 18 Englishmen there are surprise call-ups for flanker Neil Back and wing Tony Underwood.

Former Wallaby coach Bob Dwyer's recommendation was enough to swing the captaincy for

Johnson, who has never captained his country but is regarded as one of the best line-out performers in the world.

Ian McGeechan, on his third Lions tour as a coach, insists the squad contains enough options to give him a chance of emulating Willie John McBride's famous 1974 squad as the only British Isles side this century to win a Test series in South Africa.

"To maintain the support of TV, sponsors and the public, the flagship - the England team - has to be successful. People want to be associated with winners."

Jayasuriya, whose batting heroics helped Sri Lanka win the 1996 World Cup, certainly comes under that heading and becomes only the third player from his country to be named as a Cricketer of the Year.

Elsewhere in its 1,440 pages, Wisden is a satisfying number of oddities from around the cricketing world as well as its first 'gossip column'. "We don't actually reveal who cricketers are sleeping with, but there are a lot of interesting personality stories that were a bit too informal for Wisden in the old days," said Engel.

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Romania needed a 75th minute strike by Dinu Moldovan to win 1-0 in Lithuania and maintain their 100 per cent record with five successive wins. They are leaders of group eight.

Ukraine, who have a game in hand, went three points clear of Portugal at the top of group nine with a 2-1 win over Northern Ireland in Kiev, while Greece won the first official match played by Bosnia in Sarajevo 1-0 to move three points clear of Denmark at the top of group one.

In another match played earlier yesterday, Macedonia beat the Republic of Ireland 3-2 in a hard-fought match in Skopje to leapfrog the Irish and move into second place behind Romania in group eight.

SEATTLE (AP) - Nick Van Exel scored 30 points as the Los Angeles Lakers won their fourth straight and closed within a half-game of first place in the Pacific Division with a 99-97 victory over the Seattle SuperSonics on Tuesday night.

Van Exel's free throw with 3.1 seconds left gave the Lakers a 99-95 lead that clinched the victory.

Los Angeles swept the Sonics in Seattle and won the season series 3-1. The Lakers will have the tiebreaker advantage if the teams finish the regular season with the same record.

Van Exel made 10 of his career-high 28 shots and also had six assists, six rebounds and five steals. Eddie Jones added 20 and Jerome Kersey 14.

Bulls 111, Celtics 106 In Chicago, Michael Jordan broke out of a shooting slump with 21 points and Chicago won its 29th straight home game.

Chicago, 63-9, can clinch home-court advantage throughout the playoffs with three more victories.

Jordan hit his first five shots as the Bulls were building a 21-point, second-quarter lead. Chicago then held off a strong rally by the Celtics in the third quarter and re-

Variables scored twice in the closing stages to win. Australia, on a tour of Europe as part of their warm-up for their World Cup qualifiers which start in June, took the lead in the sixth minute through Tony Vidmar who scored with a simple header.

The home side equalized through Laszlo Klausz who broke through the Australian defence in the 31st minute for a fine individual strike.

Second half pressure by Hungary failed to find a breakthrough and just as the match appeared to be ending in an honourable draw, goals in the 89th minute through Kevin Muscat and a second by Vidmar in the dying seconds gave Australia their victory.

CLASSIFIEDS

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Tel Aviv

NEWS

in brief

Transport Minister wants to ban movie 'Crash'

Transport Minister Yitzhak Levy has asked that the Film Censorship Board ban the movie *Crash* because it portrays people deriving sexual gratification from watching traffic accidents. Levy called the film "scandalous" because it presents accidents as a source of pleasure and encourages violent driving. Following Levy's request, attorney Yehiel Gutman, chairman of the Film Censorship Board, decided that board members will view the film again today. Meanwhile, the National Council for the Prevention of Accidents said yesterday that it would petition the High Court of Justice to prevent the screening of the film, which has sparked a public outcry in England. *Itim*

Search for Bleichman's body halted

The search for the body of Shlomit Bleichman, believed murdered by her live-in lover Dr. Amiram Hochberg, which was resumed on Tuesday, was called off yesterday. Without the cooperation of Hochberg, who is refusing to talk to the police, the search for the body is like looking for a needle in a haystack, a police source said. *Itim*

Nahmanis finally get divorce

Danny and Ruti Nahmani, whose legal battle led to a precedent-setting Supreme Court decision and the formulation of new regulations on surrogate motherhood, were yesterday granted a divorce by the Haifa Rabbinical Court. The couple's battle had reached the state where both refused to pay the NIS 167 fee, but the court decided to grant the divorce and collect the fee at a later date. *Itim*



Ruti Nahmani (B. Hendler) and Danny Nahmani (B. Hendler)

A-G asks for more time on Katz murder

Attorney-General Elyakim Rubinstein has asked the Supreme Court for a 14-day delay in his response to whether a new trial should be ordered in the murder of Danny Katz. The request for the second trial was filed by attorney Avigdor Feldman, who is representing five Arabs from Sakhin convicted in 1985 of murdering the 15-year-old Katz. The case has become the source of a legal controversy with former attorney-general Michael Ben-Yair supporting a retrial, and State Attorney Edna Arbel opposing the idea. Supreme Court President Aharon Barak had asked Rubinstein for his opinion by April 4. *Itim*

Court rejects Deri request for trial delay

Jerusalem Magistrate's Court has turned down a request from MK Aryeh Deri for a 45-day recess in his ongoing trial on bribery charges because of the resignation of his lawyer, Dan Avi-Yitzhak. The court said it had responded favorably to most of Deri's requests for recesses in the course of the trial, but it had to find a balance between helping the defense fulfill its duties and the need to bring the trial to a speedy conclusion. It noted that Avi-Yitzhak had represented Deri only in one case and 14 defense witnesses had been questioned by other lawyers. *Itim*

Principal to be informed if pupils have AIDS

School principals and the school medical staff will receive information regarding pupils who have AIDS or are carriers of the disease, even if their parents object, under a new directive issued yesterday by Education Ministry Director-General Beazon Dell. The principal is supposed to keep the information secret, so as not to interfere with the rights of the pupil. Previously, parental permission was required for supplying such information to the schools. The directive also states that such pupils are entitled to the same rights and privileges as any other pupil, and will attend school based on their doctor's recommendation. *Aryeh Dean Cohen*

Summer matriculation schedule on the net

The schedule of summer matriculation exams is to be published beginning tonight on the Education Ministry's Internet site, <http://www.education.gov.il>. Web surfers can find the test schedule a week ahead of their cyber-challenged classmates, as newspaper listings of the schedule will only appear next week. *Aryeh Dean Cohen*

Airport police step up Pessah campaign

Undercover and uniformed police units at Ben-Gurion Airport are on the alert for increased theft accompanying the growing amount of travelers during the Pessah season. Arriving passengers have recently complained of not being able to recover belongings left on planes or in the terminal. Last week two El Al airplane cleaners were arrested after a wallet left on a plane by a passenger was found in their possession. Two employees of the Airports Authority were also arrested with a passenger's wallet. All four workers were fired. *Itim*

Drugs kosher for Pessah

A booklet listing 1,500 kosher-for-Pessah medications is available from Kupaat Holim Clalit. The drugs' ingredients were checked by a committee headed by the chief rabbi and including biochemists and pharmacists. The rabbi stated that all ointments and drops meant for the eyes and ears, inhalators, substances for injection and antiseptics are kosher for Passover. They also ruled that if a vital drug prescribed by a doctor regularly for a patient is not on the list, the patient must take it so that he doesn't endanger his life. A special Clalit hotline on medications for Pessah will be open from April 16 to 20 between 5 and 9 p.m. at (03)5701223 or (02)5713285. The list is also posted on the health fund's Internet page at www.klalit.co.il. *Judy Siegel*

Breast cancer awareness march set for today

The first Israeli march for increasing awareness about breast cancer will be held this afternoon in Jerusalem. Organized by Hadassah-Israel, with help from the Israel Cancer Association and the Jerusalem Municipality, the march will begin at 1.30 p.m. at the Liberty Bell Garden. *Judy Siegel*



Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and coalition chairman Michal Eitan (third from left) join coalition MKs in a toast celebrating the end of the Knesset's winter session yesterday. (Isaac Harari)

MKs leave House for home

By LIAT COLLINS

MKs can get out of the House and go home today, as the Knesset begins its spring recess after a little more than six months of the winter session. Sounding relieved, Speaker Dan Tichon said the predictions that this would be the most difficult Knesset ever had not proven true. This was the first session under the new system of direct elections and was also marked by the change in government. The statistical report compiled on the session contains, for the first time, a table recording the presence of MKs in the House. Benny Elon (Molodet) and Moshe Gafni (United Torah Judaism) gained top marks for attending all 91 Knesset days; followed by Michael Eitan (Likud), Shaul Yahalom (National Religious Party), and Michael Nudelman (Yisrael Ba'aliya) who were present at 90. The absentee list was headed by Shas leader Aryeh Deri, present only 12 days; Labor leader

Shimon Peres, present 43 days; and Ehud Barak, 59. All three were also towards the bottom of the list for submitting private motions to the agenda. At a press conference, Tichon mentioned what he called "the former minister phenomenon" suffered by some members of the last cabinet who now found themselves ordinary opposition MKs, and had difficulty getting used to the difference. The notable exceptions are former finance minister Avraham Shohat and former internal security minister Moshe Shahal (both Labor), who continue to be active, Tichon said. Tamar Gozansky (Hadash) gave the most speeches in the plenum and was cited by Tichon as the most industrious parliamentarian on all fronts. The winter session was marked by a proliferation of no-confidence motions: 17 in 24 weeks. Tichon said the most noteworthy days had been those devoted to the budget in December, the Hebron redeployment vote in January, and

for different reasons — the memorial session for the soldiers killed in the helicopter disaster, which united the House in mourning. Three new committees and sub-committees were created: Science and Technology; the sub-committee for restitution of Jewish property; and Public Complaints for problems which fall between the cracks and do not have a legislative answer. The average length of each session was five hours, although Tichon noted that many MKs, while in the House, did not attend the plenum. Most active in the plenum were the MKs from Molodet, Hadash, and the Democratic Arab Party. The Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee received the most referrals from the plenum. The new MKs of all parties were noticeably more industrious than their more veteran colleagues. The MKs were far more active than the government in submitting bills and amendments for first reading.

AT THE KNESSET

Panel to investigate Dotan parole

By LIAT COLLINS

The Knesset this week approved a proposal by Yona Yahav (Labor) to establish a parliamentary committee of inquiry to investigate the parole of Rami Dotan, convicted of corruption involving air force purchases. The suggestion was unanimously supported by 20 MKs. The Knesset will establish the composition of the committee within the next month. Yahav said several issues needed investigating including why the IDF did not continue its investigation alongside the US investigation; why no additional charges were filed against Dotan as new material came to light; possible connections between Dotan's actions and IAF accidents; and where is the money that Dotan received in bribes.

Police charged with bias against women Naomi Chazan (Meretz) has raised a parliamentary question on reports that senior police officials told Cmdr. Esther Dominisani, head of the police manpower division: "It's not worthwhile recruiting women; they get pregnant." Chazan said there appear to have been attempts over recent years to block the recruitment of women police officers. She gave figures which show the lack of women in top police ranks and said only a fifth of officer ranks are women. The Knesset Interior Committee, chaired by Salab Tarif (Labor), yesterday received a copy of the report on complaints filed by the members of the police force and Prisons Service to their ombudsmen.

In 1996, 96 complaints were filed. The main subjects involved relations between offi-

cers and lower ranks, including insults, discrimination, threats, and bodily harm. The other main category involved complaints about wages, conditions, promotions, and termination of service.

Several Labor and Social Affairs bills passed The Knesset yesterday passed the second and third readings of several bills forwarded by the Labor and Social Affairs Committee. Among them were bills allowing a worker to take up to 30 days of out of vacation time to care for a child with cancer and a bill granting retroactive disability payments for a child based on the date a request is filed rather than when it is approved.

Long school day bill passes hurdle A bill calling for a long school day in the next school year passed first reading in the Knesset yesterday. The bill was proposed by Meir Sheerit (Likud). It calls for a long day on a local basis, under which all educational institutions in the same town from kindergarten up would work according to the same system. It would operate first in a number of towns, according to socio-economic conditions, and by gradually increased to be countrywide by the year 2000.

Prison conditions improved A new law improving the conditions in prisons and detention centers was being hailed yesterday as a revolution in the penal system. The bill, proposed by Law Committee Chairman Shaul Yahalom (National Religious Party) passed second and third reading.

The law affects almost all aspects of detention. It will come into effect May 12. According to the law, a person can only be detained for six months before being indicted and not a year as under the current system; a person must be brought before a judge within 24 hours (except on Shabbat), instead of 48 hours. All prisoners are entitled to decent sanitary and health conditions and can appeal to the High Court for release if they are not provided. Also, each prisoner must be given a bed and must be allowed out into the fresh air for a certain period every day.

Interior Minister Eli Suissa said that he supports the continued operation of the site and that the relevant regional authorities must use the funds they are allocated for preserving optional parks to keep the memorial open.

Domestic violence bill introduced Ephraim Sneh (Labor) has filed a bill which would allow the victims of domestic violence or their relatives to appear before parole boards before a decision is made on the early release of those convicted of abuse. He said he said the bill was necessary because of the number of cases in which violent men have returned home and again attacked family members after being released from prison.

Minimum wage raised to NIS 2,349 A bill raising the minimum wage passed on second and third reading yesterday. The Knesset also approved adjusting the salaries of deputy ministers by nearly 7 percent. Under the new Minimum Wage Law, which passed 28-1, the minimum wage will be 47.5 percent of the average wage and will be calculated according to a basis of 186 workhours a month, not 200 as previously. It will be updated twice yearly instead of annually. The minimum wage had been NIS 2,230 (including the wage adjustments for April). Following the implementation of the new law it will be NIS 2,349 in May. The law also allows for overtime hours to be added. The new law also grants protection to workers who report their bosses for paying them less than the minimum wage. Labor and Social Affairs Committee Chairman Maxim Levy (Gesher) promoted the bill despite heavy pressure from industrialists to delay it until April 1998. The Finance Ministry and industrialists opposed the law, saying the extra costs could cause factories to collapse and put more people out of work. Meir Sheerit (Likud), one of the MKs who introduced the bill, criticized the industrialists, asking: "Why don't they say the same thing about themselves, when their wages amount to thousands of shekels a month?" Tamar Gozansky (Hadash) and Anat Maor (Meretz), its co-sponsors, noted that the law will improve the wages of some 300,000 workers, 60 percent of them women.

Minimum wage raised to NIS 2,349

By LIAT COLLINS

Anti-Litter Law puts high price on trash "People who litter are trash!" This is the latest keep-the-country-clean slogan announced by the Environment Ministry last week. Trash or not, they won't be cheap. A new Anti-Litter Law which passed its final readings Tuesday night raises fines for littering and pollution to unprecedented levels from the current maximum of NIS 9,600 to NIS 1.2 million. It also steps up enforcement measures. The cost of throwing cigarette butts, candy wrappers, or other litter in the street now carries a maximum NIS 50,000 fine; illegal dumping of construction waste, waste from a vessel, or littering a public place carries a fine of NIS 150,000 or a one-year prison sentence; illegal dumping of hazardous materials (including pesticides) carries a NIS 300,000 fine, or a two-year sentence. Under an amendment proposed by Avraham Poraz (Shinui), in cases when a commercial vehicle is caught dumping building waste illegally, the licenses of both the driver and vehicle can be suspended. Violations of air pollution laws, including noise and smells, carries a NIS 300,000 fine or six-month sentence. Illegally sticking posters carries a NIS 75,000 fine. Offenses involving hazardous materials which could seriously pollute the environment are subject to a fine of NIS 600,000 or three years in prison. A corporation committing such offenses may be subject to a double fine of NIS 1.2 million. Violations of public health regulations carry a NIS 150,000 fine, which can be doubled for serious cases. Environment Minister Raphael Eitan rejected criticism of the severity of the fines and said they are based on the "make-the-litter-pay principle" in force in most advanced countries.

WEATHER Golan 8-16

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Hafia 11-20 | Tiberias 10-23 |
| Afula 11-21 | Samarra 10-19 |
| Tel Aviv 12-21 | Jerusalem 8-17 |
| Beer Sheva 9-22 | Dead Sea 15-27 |
| Eilat 15-27 | |

Forecast: Partly cloudy, drop in temperatures.

AROUND THE WORLD

| | Low | High | Wind | Cloud |
|--------------|-----|------|------|--------|
| Amsterdam | 02 | 16 | 01 | partly |
| Beirut | 05 | 16 | 01 | partly |
| Buenos Aires | 11 | 18 | 01 | clear |
| Calcutta | 11 | 25 | 01 | clear |
| Chicago | 02 | 17 | 01 | partly |
| Copenhagen | 05 | 11 | 01 | clear |
| Frankfurt | 01 | 14 | 01 | clear |
| Geneva | 05 | 11 | 01 | clear |
| Helsinki | 01 | 14 | 01 | clear |
| Hong Kong | 12 | 20 | 01 | cloudy |
| Jakarta | 22 | 30 | 01 | rain |
| London | 08 | 17 | 01 | clear |
| Los Angeles | 14 | 21 | 01 | clear |
| Madrid | 08 | 17 | 01 | clear |
| Moscow | 03 | 12 | 01 | clear |
| Mumbai | 24 | 30 | 01 | cloudy |
| Nairobi | 06 | 18 | 01 | partly |
| Paris | 05 | 15 | 01 | clear |
| Rome | 05 | 15 | 01 | clear |
| Stockholm | 05 | 11 | 01 | clear |
| Sydney | 11 | 18 | 01 | cloudy |
| Toronto | 01 | 10 | 01 | clear |
| Warsaw | 07 | 14 | 01 | clear |
| Zurich | 05 | 16 | 01 | clear |

Winning cards
The winning cards in yesterday's Mifal Hapayis daily Chance game were the 8 of spades, 10 of hearts, king of diamonds, and 9 of clubs.

New Anti-Litter Law puts high price on trash

By LIAT COLLINS

Violations of air pollution laws, including noise and smells, carries a NIS 300,000 fine or six-month sentence. Illegally sticking posters carries a NIS 75,000 fine. Offenses involving hazardous materials which could seriously pollute the environment are subject to a fine of NIS 600,000 or three years in prison. A corporation committing such offenses may be subject to a double fine of NIS 1.2 million. Violations of public health regulations carry a NIS 150,000 fine, which can be doubled for serious cases. Environment Minister Raphael Eitan rejected criticism of the severity of the fines and said they are based on the "make-the-litter-pay principle" in force in most advanced countries.

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